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THESIS TITLE "Henry Hopkins and George Clarke: Two Tasmanian Non-conformists"

HENRY HOPKINS AND GEORGE CLARKE: TWO TASMANIAN NONCONFORMISTS

by

ALISON ALEXANDER, B.A.Hons.

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
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CONTENTS

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any university and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

A Alexander

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Abstract

Henry Hopkins and George Clarke were two Congregationalists who lived in Tasmania between 1822 and 1913. Hopkins and his wife, both of lower middle-class origins, emigrated to the colony and quickly built up wealth, by importing and retailing ironmongery and by largely establishing the wool trade in Van Diemen's Land. Hopkins used his wealth to establish the Congregational church, and to attempt to build up a society where honest labourers could, by hard work, achieve independence. To this end he was one of a group who established banks, insurance companies, churches, schools and new industries, and supported many charities. When Victoria was settled, he duplicated his Tasmanian activities there. Hopkins' career is typical of many nonconformist merchants, and is a negation of the prevalent view that Van Diemen's Land was inhabited by bad convicts and worse free settlers.

Clarke, Hopkins' son-in-law, was a Congregationalist minister, highly regarded by the community as a whole, and with a most influential congregation. He eschewed money-making and politics, and through sermons, lectures and pamphlets encouraged Tasmanians to be tolerant and reasonable. Though conciliatory, he occasionally made a public stand, for example, against Chiniquy's anti-Catholic behaviour, and, earlier in New Zealand, against white injustice to the Maoris. Like Hopkins, Clarke was interested in education, though more at the tertiary level. He was instrumental in establishing the University of Tasmania, was its first Vice-Chancellor (1890-

-1898), then Chancellor (1898-1907). It was due to his wise leadership that the university survived many crises in these years.

Hopkins and Clarke typify several trends in Tasmanian history: from rather Dickensian early days to a more sophisticated outlook, from a strongly evangelical creed to a more reasoned one, from a society largely concerned with economic survival to a secure, middle-class environment. They also typify a class whose contribution to Tasmanian development has been largely ignored.

Chapter 1

ENGLISH ORIGINS

Henry Hopkins was born on the 16th August 1787 in Deptford, a largely working-class port area of London.[1] He was the second of eleven children of Elizabeth and Henry Hopkins (though only seven of the children survived infancy).[2]

Henry Hopkins senior, born in 1754, was either a maker or seller of watches. In Baillie's Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World Henry Hopkins of Deptford is noted as making a watch before 1780, and from 1802 - 1824.[3] An engraving of Hopkins senior shows a rather dapper man in Regency clothes, looking neat and prosperous.[4]

The Hopkins claimed a romantic tradition that in the time of Elizabeth I the family were buccaneers, on the rather tenuous evidence that Samuel Hopkins, goldsmith of London, had as a coat of arms a burning castle (with the motto Vigilo et Spero, I watch and I hope). In William III's reign Hopkins and Bond were moneylenders; Hopkins died childless and left his property to Bond on the condition that he change his name to Hopkins.[5] By the late eighteenth century the family had decayed a good deal, according to Henry Hopkins' granddaughter;[5] while facts are scarce, if Hopkins came from a lower-middle class tradesman's family it would be compatible with the rest of his career.

His mother, née Elizabeth A'Gutta, came from a very pious family of Flemish Protestant refugees; her

only surviving writing is a devout poem composed on her fiftieth birthday.[6] The piety of his mother and the commercial background of his father were to be the two dominant influences in Henry Hopkins' life.

Nothing is known of his general education, but as in later life he showed no bent for anything cultural his training was probably largely commercial. In his teens he was put into the wool trade, and later claimed that he had worked here for sixteen years, becoming a wool stapler and felmonger, or dealer in sheep skins.[7] At the some time he was deeply affected by the spiritual awakening which was associated with the forming of the great missionary societies, and began a lifelong enthusiasm for their work.[8] His nonconformist religion was simple, based on a personal relationship between God and man; he had no time for doctrinal frills, being far more interested in the practicolities of establishing God's kingdom on earth, an event he felt to be imminent. He felt Christ's command to carry the Bible into all countries as a personal message, and in the year of his death recorded, 'Sixty years ago [in 1810] I wrote in my cash book that I would devote one tenth of my income to the spread of the Gospel and the welfare of the poor. I had not much then....' [9] All his life he saw himself as a crusader against 'the real and radical evils which the Gospel is intended to cure.'[10]

Hopkins married his cousin Sarah Rout, daughter of Margaret A'Gutta and William Rout, and the product of a similar devout nonconformist home. Sarah was born in 1793 and seems from her diary to have led a cloistered life. Educated 'under the care of pious females, whose

instructions I trust I shall never forget,'[11] she wrote at the age of twenty-three that she had 'never yet dwelt in the house of an unbeliever.'[11] In 1815 she was seriously ill, and expected to die (so much so that she chose the text for her funeral sermon)[12]; on her recovery she joined the Congregational church, and her main interest was in planting the Gospel in 'this dark village',[13] where she taught in the Sunday School. Her diary is almost completely dominated by religion. 'I have no pleasure in anything earthly,' she wrote in 1815.[14] She feared most 'lukewarmness - that worst of evils.'[15]

In 1815 she recorded, 'Lately I have been tempted by an invitation to join the giddy multitude, and the enemy of souls would feign have me go, but dear Lord though art greater than he, rebuke him, lest he overcome me.'[16] Four days later she was able to write: 'I have found his grace sufficient for me. I trusted in his strength, and he has delivered me.'[17] At times she rose to exalted sentiment (omitted when extracts from her diary were published after her death): 'My heavenly husband! What inimitable condescension in a God! and yet this God is my God!, my beloved is mine and I am his.'[18] However, 1816 saw her asking God to 'condescend to direct me in this important step ... if it should be thy will that I should have an earthly husband.'[19] Apparently it was, for she married Henry Hopkins in April 1817 at Shoreditch.[20] Though nothing is mentioned he was probably also a member of the Congregational church; he was certainly baptised in a dissenting church. It would appear that Sarah Hopkins

had received a better education than her husband, for she wrote much more fluently than he did, and made fewer spelling and grammar mistakes. However, they were very similar in background and general outlook.

In 1821 Hopkins applied to settle in the colonies. By now he and Sarah were living in Bermondsey, another working-class area, and from here he wrote to Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State:-

'My Lord,

I have a great wish as well as my wife to go to Sydney Cove New South Wales as a settler & merchant, if your Lordship will do me the great kindness to grant me such indulgences as are usual, I shall make shipments for that place.

I am

with the greatest respect

My Lord

Your Obedient Servant

Henry Hopkins.'[21] (sic)

In answer to Bathurst's reply Hopkins wrote a second letter, dated 28th May 1821.

'Sir,

In taking the liberty of answering your favor of the 30 Ultimo I beg to observe my Capital for Agricultural purposes will exceed five Hundred Pounds And if it may please his Lordship to assign me a grant of Land I shall make every effort to improve it But if a choice is allowd wether in New South Wales or Van Dieman Land I should prefer defering that

choice till my arrival in the colony when I should be more competent to decide. Otherwise I submit to the Selection of Government For testimonials of character I enclose a note from J.Dyer Esq^{r} and beg to refer to J. Curling Esq^{r} Magistrate County of Surry & Mr. Keates Boro of Southwark who are well acquainted with my character & conections

I am

Sir

with due respect

Your Most Obedient

Humble Servant

Henry Hopkins.'[22](sic)

A letter from Dyer, Chief Clerk of the Admiralty, testifies that he had long known Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins 'to be persons of most exemplary character, and well affected to His Majesty's Person and Government,'[23] while a third letter from Hopkins accompanies a testimonial from an Alderman Bridges M.P.[24] Clearly Hopkins had been able to find most respectable referees.

In reply the Secretary of State provided Hopkins with an order for the Colonial Department for a grant of land proportioned to the means he possessed for its cultivation and improvement.[25]

From his letters it does not appear that Hopkins was particularly interested in either Van Diemen's Land or the possibilities of the wool trade. A clue to the reason for his eventual choice of Van Diemen's Land occurs in West, whose History of Tasmania was published in 1852: he wrote that Hopkins saw a sample of Van

Diemen's Land wool in London, 'lying in the docks in the worst possible condition.'[26] The wool had been sent from Hobart in the Regalia which left in May 1821[27] and would have arrived in London in October at the earliest, some months after Hopkins' application to Bathurst. Hopkins' obituary in the Tasmanian Times said that he 'is said to have determined to visit Tasmania by a report which reached England that Tasmanian settlers were in the habit of burning their wool! His intention was to purchase skins and wool for export to England after such treatment in the colony as would render them marketable at home.'[28] Perhaps this report came from the Regalia.

The possibility of using his expertise as a wool merchant in a field where this experience was obviously lacking probably appealed strongly to Hopkins. His later career shows that he was able and ambitious, and he was possibly frustrated by the depressed conditions in England at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, when times were very difficult and opportunity for young men lacking. He states too that his wife wished to emigrate. In 1819 Sarah bore a child, which died, and typically she wrote of this as God's blessing: 'My heavenly Father made me a mother, but knowing my proneness to earth, he in mercy took my beloved infant to himself, to dwell in perfect bliss.'[29] She herself was very ill again, and in this and the next years she records moves to 'new habitations.'[30] Possibly this unsettled and unpromising life led them both to seek better conditions in the colonies.

Like other emigrants they collected all the

capital they could; Hopkins mentions that he has over £500, and it is recorded in the Clyde Company Papers that he brought capital to the colony in the form of disposable goods.[31] From a document dated 11.9.1821, part of this was footwear which Hopkins bought in conjunction with his brother Thomas: 294 pairs of boots and shoes of various types, packed in four trunks with a total value of £127/6/6.[32]

A note on the back of the sheet runs, 'This was my First Investment on board the Hope and arrived safe in VDLand on the 10 September 1822. Henry Hopkins.' His financial position is not entirely clear; it seems from the Clyde Company Papers that this investment was part of his capital for agricultural purposes, but not necessarily, while the mention of a First Investment suggests a second, but whether this was on the Hope or refers to later shipments is unsure. At any rate it seems probable that Hopkins would have come to Van Diemen's Land with under £700 in goods or cash. Though this suggests a fairly sound financial position, he was far from wealthy.

By now interest in the colony was awakening, partly due to several books about it published in England. Hopkins may well have read Lieutenant Jeffreys' book, The geographical and descriptive delineation of the Island of Van Diemen's Land, published in London in 1820: certainly Robert Mather, a fellow-passenger with Hopkins to the island, had read it (though after arriving in Van Diemen's Land he commented that Jeffreys was not to be depended on).[33] Jeffreys, a naval officer recently returned from the colony, wrote an enthusiastic account of

its fertile, well-watered soil, with many thousands of acres ungranted; its landscape and its salubrious climate. However, he felt bound to point out to merchants that foreign commerce 'must for some time to come, be necessarily confined within a limited scale.'[34] He reported that there were 11,116 sheep, mainly in the south, of mixed breed, largely Teeswater crossed by merino ram, producing moderately fine wool. He made no specific reference to the wool trade, but Evans, whose Geographical, Historical and Topographical Description of Van Diemen's Land was published in 1822, was more precise. 'Wool has every promise of becoming a staple commodity in Van Diemen's Land,' he wrote,[35] while Godwin in 1823 estimated that capital invested in Van Diemen's Land sheep would yield 166% in three years, for the absence of foreign competition and the abundance of pasture meant that there were no checks on the trade's growth.[36] Jeffreys preferred Van Diemen's Land to Port Jackson, as it was not so hot, with fewer storms or hail, or extremes of temperature or droughts, or the violent and uncertain seasons of the mainland.[37]

As well as economic motives, the Hopkins may have had missionary ideals in emigrating; certainly some of their fellow-passengers did. The Methodist Minister in Hobart, shocked by the godlessness of the citizens, had asked for godly emigrants, and some sixteen families had responded. They included Robert Mather, whose aims in emigrating were to improve the morals of the people by establishing Sunday Schools, and to move to a warmer climate for his wife's health.[38] Mather was a Scottish hosier, who sold his business, invested his capital of

over £2,400 in goods, and in 1821 joined the other Methodist families in the ship Hope to sail to Van Diemen's Land.[39] The Mather records are ambiguous, and it is impossible to tell from them whether the Hopkins were among the passengers; there is only one mention of 'Mr. Hopkins and his wife, and Whittaker and his wife, who had been steerage passengers in the 'Hope'.'[40] However, Hopkins' mention of his investment on the ship suggests that he and his wife were passengers.

The Mather story now relates that the owner of the Hope, Degraves, was a rascal who had bought the vessel for a song and knew well that she would never reach Van Diemen's Land. Mather said that Degraves told the carpenter that if the Hope reached Cape Verde it would answer his purpose, which was presumably to collect the insurance. The Hope sailed from London, ran into bad weather, and was forced to put into Ramsgate harbour, where due to the representations of the passengers, who among other complaints said that Degraves had not enough provisions for the journey, the Customs officers inspected the ship and found it overloaded and unseaworthy. They impounded it and condemned Degraves,who was imprisoned for debt, and after a good deal of argument the sixty-six passengers were given a free passage to Van Diemen's Land by the Government on board the much larger and better ship Heroine.[41]

Godwin, however, tells a different version. On the day the Hope was due to sail, he wrote, the passengers were not ready, and the delay caused Degraves considerable expense. At length the Hope sailed, and reached Ramsgate, where repairs were necessary. Here the

passengers, 'this self-styled religious party,' became very impatient and quarrelsome, and complained of the ship with the view to procuring a free passage in a Government ship. Degraves' ruin seemed certain when the Customs officers heeded their complaints. However, an investigation was set up, where the depositions were to be taken on oath; all became confused, and the complaints melted away. Degraves proved that the ship was sufficiently appointed in every respect for the voyage, and all the charges were disproved. The Government was understandably inclined to renege on its offer of a free passage, but Degraves petitioned that it might be provided, and so the passengers finally sailed on the Heroine,'victualled and regulated somewhat like convicts.' Degraves ultimately received compensation for his losses.[42]

Whatever the truth of the matter, there was a great deal of upset, in which Mather, from his writings, seems to have been the spokesman for the passengers. He does not mention Hopkins in connection with the argument. They finally sailed from England in April 1822 on the Heroine, advertised as a 'fine fast-sailing copper-bottomed ship of 400 tons, with superior accommodation.'[43] Ann Mather kept a journal of the trip,[44] which the family found very uncomfortable, with rough weather and cramped living conditions - in the Hope they had been cabin passengers, but now they were in the steerage. The only consolation was that when weather permitted divine service was read by George Clarke, a missionary bound for New Zealand. Oddly enough pious Ann Mather does not mention equally pious Sarah Hopkins, but their

husbands agreed to set up a business together in Hobart, while the Hopkins and Clarkes became very close friends.

In June the Heroine spent six days at Rio de Janeiro; great excitement occurred when the captain sailed in a hurry, leaving fifteen passengers, including Mather, on shore. They were picked up the following day. The rest of the voyage to Van Diemen's Land was trying, especially as for the last three months the passengers were entirely confined to the cabin, with the hatches closed, the tarpaulin laid down on top, and no fresh air or light. In this fetid atmosphere Sarah Hopkins gave birth to a son on 6th September, four days out from Hobart off the stormy west coast of Van Diemen's Land.[44] Fortunately mother and son survived.

Chapter 2

EARLY YEARS IN HOBART 1822-1825

On September 10th 1822 the Heroine arrived in Hobart,[1] one of several ships to arrive in a single week, bringing a large total of 106 immigrants. Although the settlement had been established nearly twenty years, it was still in a very embryonic state, with under 3,000 inhabitants, of whom a large proportion were convicts. Streets and houses were primitive, there was no wharf, and the Mathers were shocked by the vice drunkenness and debauchery of the place.[2] 1822 was the first year in which there were large numbers of new settlers, and West later wrote that 'by the capital which they invested, and the habits of decency and enterprise they exhibited, they gave a new tone to the colony.'[3]

They arrived in a colony which was still essentially a large prison, under the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor. A military officer, he was in charge of the guards and their prisoners, land grants, Government positions and Government supplies. The small number of free settlers found themselves in the position of being obliged to obey the Governor, who controlled most of the essential institutions in their lives and constituted the entire government. The colony was thus founded 'part slave, part free', with no clear role for the development of the free.

Early governors merely ran a small convict settlement, but Sorell (1817-1824) encouraged free settlers and

economic expansion, and was popular with most colonists because of his congenial attitude and liberal outlook. Shortly after Hopkins' arrival he was recalled, and his successor Arthur (1824-1836) was much more authoritarian. He greatly improved the efficiency of the convict system, but was unpopular with free settlers because he expected the same obedience from them as from the prisoners, disliking democratic ideas such as freedom of the press, an elected assembly, or trial by jury. In 1828 the British Government announced that a nominee Legislative Council would be appointed to advise the Governor, but this had little influence on Arthur.

Economically, Van Diemen's Land was in its earliest days in a state of suspended animation, a prison largely concerned with convicts. For some time trade and free settlers were not encouraged; in any case no staple export had been found. By 1820 under Governor Sorell's encouragement more settlers had arrived, and grain and salted meat were exported to New South Wales, but even when Hopkins came in 1822 the economy was almost static. However, some endeavour was being made to find a market for colonial produce, which by now included wool, hides, horns, tallow, kangaroo and seal skins, [4] while Van Diemen's Land's advantages of cheap and plentiful land and labour were beginning to be appreciated. The wool industry, Hopkins' area of experience, was just starting to move: over the next few years his activity was central in its development, and so in the development of a viable Vandiemonian economy, as wool became the island's major export.

For some years after Van Diemen's Land was first settled sheep were seen as valuable only for their meat. Shearing was delayed as long as possible, often until the sheep was injured, and wool was burned, used as manure, or left to rot. It was coarse, and there was no market for it. Bonwick distinguishes between the fine-fleeced sheep in the north and the coarse-fleeced sheep in the south,[5] but no other writer does this. The first exports were on the Mary Ann, which left Port Dalrymple for Port Jackson in 1816 with a cargo of wool, 'which we hope may answer the speculation' wrote the Gazette,[6] but no more is heard of it and the Mary Ann was soon back transporting wheat. No more activity is recorded until 1819, when another cargo of wool left Port Dalrymple for New South Wales, and John Raine arrived in Hobart as a passenger on board the Regalia. He purchased wool and various other colonial products, and advertised that it was 'his intention to trade between these Settlements and Port Jackson, for the mutual advantage of both, and trusts with a full cargo the sole produce of the Colonies.'[7] The Gazette, which encouraged any colonial industry, wrote that 'we are happy to find a commencement has been made to turn to advantage this essential article.'[8] Various pieces of advice were published during the next few years on the care of sheep, and proper treatment of the fleece (washing, sorting and cleaning), while the arrival of various shiploads of merinos to improve Van Diemen's Land's flocks was also reported. Sorell encouraged these imports, for he and others realised that Van Diemen's Land was ideal for sheep grazing, which needed a

temperate climate, large areas of cheap land, little skilled labour and a relatively small capital investment. These conditions suited the island very well, while transport to the English market was cheap and readily available, as ships bringing goods and passengers to Australia were eager to obtain cargo for the return trip. The only disadvantage of wool was that it was sold in overseas markets liable to fluctuations beyond the control of the colonial economy.[9]

In 1820 and 1821 the colonial government bought coarse wool at 3d to 4d per pound, to be used as mattress stuffing and for the manufacture of coarse cloth. It was shipped to Port Jackson, but the market was limited, and the low price scarcely covered the cost of bringing the wool to Hobart.[10] A more encouraging report in the Gazette told of 58 bales (there are approximately 250 pounds of wool to one bale) of Van Diemen's Land wool sold in April 1820 at an average price of 3/7 per pound, with a top price of 5/-, this being unsorted wool in the fleece.[11] Perhaps it came from the north, for there is no record of it leaving Hobart. The only outlet for southern woolgrowers was provided by John Raine, still buying wool in January, and merchants Thomas Kent and Hogan who advertised that they would accept wool in payment for goods (though Kent gave a liberal discount for cash).[12] Although this looks promising, the fact of these advertisements does not mean that the merchants did buy any wool, or if so at what prices, and with what result.

1821 saw more activity in the wool trade. Although most merchants would only take cash or wheat for their

goods, four were also taking wool and Nathaniel Thornton, a prominent merchant, bought wool for cash, at prices from 4d per pound upwards.[13] He advertised this many times during the year, and his purchase may have been part of the cargo of the Brixton, which left for England in December, with a cargo of colonial produce, chiefly wool. The Skelton's captain advertised that he would advance one third of the value of any shipments of wool, but when the ship sailed it was not recorded whether she did carry any wool.[14] The Regalia finally left in May 1821 with 18,000 pounds of wool,[15] and the Gazette wrote: 'As an encouragement to the settlers to preserve and bring to market their wool, and as an assurance that a great portion of the wool of Van Diemen's Land, even in its present state, is desirable for the English market, we have much pleasure in stating that a Gentleman of the Settlement, who has for the last three years been in correspondence with New South Wales and London on the subject of this article, received, during the present week, £200 sterling, on the spot, for his wool, which goes home by the Regalia.'[15] His sheep had no merino in them, and the wool was not washed or tied in fleeces, but put in small bags, as free from hair as possible. According to the Mather papers, Raine bought his wool at 10d. per pound.[16]

All this sounds promising, but according to Hartwell, by this stage those merchants who had sent fleeces to England had lost on the venture - presumably Thornton and Raine, although Raine was presented by the Society of Arts with a silver medal for opening a market for Van Diemen's Land wool.[17] Still, he was also bankrupt,[18] and

the wool from the Regalia had no market price in England; like most Van Diemen's Land wool it was of coarse inferior quality and dirty in appearance, and its considerable expenses included a duty of 3d per pound, levied in London. It was this wool which Hopkins saw on the London docks 'in the worst possible condition.'[19]

In 1822 the duty on wool was reduced from 3d to 1d per pound,[19] and there was a good deal of activity in the wool business. Eight Hobart merchants were receiving wool in payment for goods or debts, and four were buying wool, with Edward Lord even equipped with warehouses to store it. The Commissariat Stores also bought wool for a fortnight and sent it to Port Jackson. In April the Royal George took to England 40,000 pounds of wool, the consignment of two men: as Lord was a passenger, he was presumably one of them,[20] while Thomas Wells was the other. By the time Hopkins arrived in September there was definitely an incipient wool trade in the colony.

When the partnership of Mather and Hopkins advertised goods for sale shortly after their arrival, they added, 'Mather and Hopkins having been accustomed to the Wool Trade in England, and being desirous of carrying it on in Van Diemen's Land, take this opportunity to inform the numerous stock-owners and settlers of the Island, that they will not only receive that commodity as well as wheat in exchange for goods, but also purchase it at a fair price.'[21] It was this advertisement that West referred to when, after a brief survey of the wool trade to 1822, showing it to have

been a failure, he continued:- 'To Mr. Henry Hopkins the public are indebted for the first appreciation of Tasmanian wool. In September 1822, he offered by advertisement a price in money, and bought at 4d per pound. Twelve bales sold in London, the entire wool export of the colony, for 7d per pound or £88: the expenses were nearly half that sum.'[22] Written over twenty years after the event, by a friend and admirer of Hopkins, this is obviously not entirely correct. As has been seen, large quantities of wool had already been exported, and others besides Hopkins were buying. In the last four months of the year the majority of Hobart merchants were accepting wool in payment for goods (eleven firms), while Read and Bethune, Edward Curr and Mason, Thornton and Bostock, and Hopkins and Mather were purchasing it.[23] There is only West's account that Hopkins sent twelve bales to London: certainly the Emerald took a cargo including wool to England in December, and in the same month the Castle Forbes carried colonial produce, which could have included wool.[24]

West goes on to say that in 1823, 137,500 pounds were exported in the Deveron, and an equal quantity in other vessels;[22] this is approximately correct for the Skelton took 90,000 pounds and the Lusitania 11,500. The Hobart Town Gazette gives the Deveron's cargo as 100,000 pounds,[25] which would make a yearly total of over 200,000 pounds. During the year fifteen merchants advertised that they would receive wool in payment for goods, while seven, including Hopkins, bought it.[26] When the Deveron sailed the Gazette reported with

pleasure that as an article so long neglected was now exported in a very large amount, by 'shippers not long arrived from Europe in particular.'[25] This sounds like Hopkins, for although Mather had been willing to receive wool he soon dropped out of the wool trade. The largest single exporter on the Deveron, Wells, 'a gentleman who has been indefatigable in promoting the expart of wool in the last three years'[27] had arrived in 1817, so is unlikely to be described as a new arrival. He later reported that English accounts described his wool as not superior, full of moats, and not worth exporting unless Van Diemen's Land prices were very low. The advice was reiterated to wash, clean and sort wool before exporting it; none of Wells' wool had been washed, and he had received an average of 7½d per pound.[27] Some wool on the Deveron was washed, and fetched 1/- per pound; this could refer to Hopkins for surely the felmonger must have known the best way to present wool. Wells urged Van Diemen's Land growers to persevere with wool, as the market in Britain was inexhaustible and prices fair, 'even for the wools of Van Diemen's Land.'[27] The Deveron's wool had fetched 3d to 1/- per pound, that of the Royal George 4½d to 9d, all unwashed.

This low opinion of Van Diemen's Land wool was echoed in a report quoted from the Sydney Gazette: 'Nothing can shew the superiority of our wool over that of Van Diemen's Land in a stronger light than the following extract from a London Commercial Report, dated 20th September 1822:- 140 bales of wool from VDL, 4d to 11d per lb. (2 lots 2/2 to 2/7), 13 bales of wool from NSW 2/4 to 3/4 per lb.'

Van Diemen's Land growers were irritated by this report, and the President of the Agricultural Society told members that only in the last three years had any systematic attention been given to wool, and the results were excellent, as the two well-priced lots showed.[28] The Hobart Town Gazette commented hopefully several times on the rapid improvement of fleeces, while another cause for hope was cheap freight: it cost less to ship fleeces to England from Australia than it did from Vienna or Leipzig.

In 1823 there are few mentions of Hopkins in the Gazette: he advertised in January that he would purchase wool, and accept wheat, wool and skins in payment for goods,[29] but this is the only reference to him for some time. Possibly he was busy organising wool cargo for the Deveron, which was two months in Hobart. She finally sailed in June,[25] and at the same time Hopkins' name begins to appear. In August his advertisements of goods for sale do not state that he will take wool,[30] and most other merchants also ceased to accept it in the last three months of the year. Perhaps shearing was over, or Hopkins already had enough graziers supplying him: he was never one to waste money in unnecessary advertising. Other merchants now began to drop out of the wool trade, as several ventures had resulted in a loss. Hopkins was hopeful, however, and applied for an allotment of ground to build premises for the business of felmonger and wool stapler. 'I pursued the above business for several years in England' he wrote.[31] The allotment was given.

In 1824 two ships, the Allies and the Woodlark, took wool to London, while the Commissariat Department bought

a small amount. Growers were still being urged to improve their flocks and the quality of the wool was evidently still low. Prices for Van Diemen's Land wool were lower than that of New South Wales, though wool from the Castle Forbes was quoted as bringing from 1/7 to 6/2 per pound in London. Wool from the Royal George brought 4½d to 9d, a more realistic figure for the coarse unimproved wool of the south, while one J. Hood wrote in a letter that he had bought wool of good quality in Hobart at 4d per pound.[32] Very few merchants advertised that they would accept wool in payment for goods - only three, not including Hopkins - and none offered to buy it.

In 1825 only one ship, the Cumberland, took wool to England, 479 bales or 120,000 pounds. In the early part of the year there was little interest shown in wool, most merchants accepting only cash or wheat, although Hopkins in February was accepting wool, with a few others. Raine reappears, selling goods from the Cumberland, but has nothing to do with wool. There is a report from a grazier, Edward Abbott, who sent 13 bales to England in the Woodlark in 1824. A little improved, it averaged 1/3 per pound, expenses and charges were about a fourth, and the profit was £174/10/9 'STERLING'.[33] Another London report gave prices of 1/8 upwards, but said that Van Diemen's Land wool was still marred by stiche or thick black hair, and lack of care in cleaning and getting up, while some had been damaged in transit by salt water.[34]

An interesting account of a venture into the wool trade is given by another recent emigrant, Hamilton

Wallace, who in September 1825 wrote: 'I have three tons wool which I intended sending by the Cumberland but could not get it packed etc., to get it on board prior to the ship clearing out. I have wrote Messrs Dobrus for insurance on it advising them to sell it to the best advantage. The reason of my doing so was that Capt. Palin said he would do all in his power to take it as I had it packed, I have little doubt I will get it forwarded by the next ship if not by the Cumberland.' He went on to say that the best fleeces sold in Hobart for 6d to 7½d per pound.[35]

Towards the end of the year there was renewed interest in wool. Seven merchants were taking it in payment, while two were buying it, and moreover offering to wash, sort, press and warehouse it. Bethune and Grant advertised that they were authorised by a London mercantile house to make advances on wool. The Colonial Times reported in December that 'As two or three vessels have taken up at this Port for England, much demand has been lately made for wool. Although several Merchants have been advertising for this article of export, yet it fetches but a comparatively small price, some having been sold the other day for sixpence, while the same quality of wool is calculated to be worth 4s per lb in England. Some of the settlers have however obtained as high a price as 2/- per lb on the spot for it.'[36] In early 1826 the Denmark Hill took 150 bales (37,500 pounds) and the Andromeda 315 bales (80,000 pounds).

There is nothing in contemporary accounts to show what share Hopkins had in this activity, although the fact that he was deeply interested in the wool trade

and its encouragement is shown in an application to Governor Arthur for a land grant. 'I beg to inform Your Excellency that my particular object in requesting a grant is the grazing of sheep and the improvement of wool, as for sixteen years I was engaged in the wool trade in England, and thereby acquired a thorough acquaintance with a department of business highly useful to settlers in this colony.'[37] However, he did not obtain his grant because he was not prepared to give the required undertaking that he would take up residence on his grant.

At a very rough estimate, since Hopkins arrived in September 1822 to February 1826 about 600,000 pounds of wool had been exported from Hobart, and sold in London at a roughly average price of about 9d per pound, thus bringing £22,500. If, as Abbott reports, charges and expenses were about a quarter of the price, this meant a profit of almost £16,800. For graziers like Abbott and Wells this was mostly profit: merchants like Hopkins would have to pay graziers, but even so there was a good deal of money being made by a relatively small group, comprising the few graziers with the enterprise to export their own wool, and the dozen or so merchants who had entered the trade. As some of these did well and some did not, those who succeeded would have been earning a good income.

That one of the successful merchants was Hopkins cannot be established from contemporary documents, which are almost nonexistent, but later descriptions definitely place him as the chief exporter of wool in the south. Writers James Bonwick[38] and G.T. Lloyd[39]

gave Hopkins the credit for establishing the trade in coarse wool, by persevering in shipping it, at first at trifling profit, until he got the wool so well cleared and improved that the price rose, to the mutual benefit of settler and exporter. Thus, wrote Lloyd, Hopkins laid the foundations of a "large and well-deserved fortune."[39] A writer who seems to have known Hopkins well described in his obituary how he visited sheep farms and bought large stocks of wool at twopence per pound, to the great joy of its owners. For several seasons he had the market very much to himself, and bought extensively, thus helping many who were sorely in need.[40] In 1856 Hopkins was praised in the Colonial Times for creating the wool trade as the first to embark capital in it. The example was given of an up-country settler, who had several years' clip of wool, so worthless to him that he had more than once tried to burn it. Coming to Hobart Town one day, he learned that Mr. Hopkins was purchasing wool, and despatched his stock to town, where he received about £200 as its price. From that day he was an energetic woolgrower.[41]

Although these accounts were written after the event, there is no other reason to discredit them, while they help to clear up several obscure points. One is why West can state in one paragraph that a price for wool of 3d per pound scarcely paid for its conveyance from the interior, but in the next praise Hopkins for offering 4d per pound: from the Obituary above it would seem that Hopkins actually bought wool on the wool-growers' properties and himself organised its conveyance to Hobart. Surely he would have done this with the

wool he bought at 2d per pound, or the growers would have made no profit. These absences inland could also partly explain why his name is frequently absent from lists where one would expect it to be (requesting lower imposts, for example) and why he had relatively few advertisements in the Gazette.

It is also possible to reconcile the often-repeated statement that Hopkins began the wool industry in Tasmania with the fact that many others were involved in this before and at the same time as his arrival. From the three above accounts it would seem that although others exported wool, the quality and price were so variable that many of them made a loss; indeed Melville, writing in 1834, said that the rage for emigration on the early 20's brought many settlers whose whole stock of knowledge about sheep 'consisted in what they had learnt from having had a leg of mutton occasionally at table.'[42] As far as can be established none of the other merchants had any prior knowledge of the wool trade, an extremely specialised field where accurate handling of the wool was necessary if profit was to be made.

Unlike all the others Hopkins had experience in the wool trade and thus knew what he was doing. Presumably he knew better than inexperienced merchants the quality of the wool, the probable price it would fetch, and the best way to prepare and pack it, while it is likely that he would have contacts in London who could assist him at the English end of transactions. This knowledge would have given him a great advantage over other wool exporters, and his experience may also have given him a

belief in the possibility of the wool trade and a knowledge of the worth of both improved and unimproved wool, which may have helped him to persevere with the trade even though profits were at first small.

Besides Hopkins the wool-exporter can be seen emerging Hopkins the general merchant. Four days after the Heroine arrived in Hobart in September 1822 Mather advertised goods for sale in the Gazette,[43] and a week later in the next issue he and Hopkins, now in partnership, offered a varied list of items including clothes, shoes, ironmongery, tools, medicines, furniture, books and fish sauces.[44] They omitted to give an address, but on 30th November when they advertised a long list of goods for sale this was given as Pullen's House, Potter's Hill,[45] where Mather was living. He described this as the best place for trade in Hobart, and his prospects as flattering.[46] In later years Hopkins liked to refer to the small and miscellaneous business which the firm transacted, and humorously describe the number of promissory notes he and Mather had to issue to make up the requisite change for their customers, for the colony was very short of ready cash.[47] A more social occasion occurred on October 15th when the Hopkins' infant son Henry was baptised in the Methodist Church with Mather as a witness.[48]

The partnership between Mather and Hopkins did not last long, and was not happy. Mather's daughter later recorded that all Hopkins contributed was two boxes of shoes,[49] although from the list of Hopkins' investments, this represented half his stocks and approximately £60 worth of goods. Mather said he was disappointed in

Hopkins' expertise in the wool business. Ann Mather wrote to England, 'Mr. Mather connected himself with Mr. H. because he understood the wool trade, and believed him to be an upright, pious man, he thought they might if he would attend to his own branch of the business, mutually help each other. But in a very short time we found Mr. H. would not attend to the wool business then did not understand anything of trade in general, we found it absolutely necessary to part again. This caused us much anxiety and trouble.'[50] She also recorded that Mather 'had taken Mr. Hopkins into partnership, he having been in the wool trade in this country, but Mr. H. putting his own business first [eight words erased] they are going to separate.'[51] In early December Mather was advertising alone,[52] and at the end of the month a notice was published to the effect that the partnership had been dissolved on 23rd December, with debtors requested to pay their debts to Mather.[53] On the face of it the accusation that Hopkins knew nothing of trade and would not attend to the wool business is surprising, as he later became such an eminent trader and wool-exporter. However, he was also ambitious and, according to J.B. Walker, mean,[54] so was probably a difficult partner, while Mather, described by Savery as cringing, may also have been less than ideal. Both men were in an insecure position, with a living to make and a family to support in a new and unstable environment, so it is not surprising that the partnership foundered, like many another in Hobart at that time.[56] In later years the two men often served together on committees, apparently amicably, so

presumably the quarrel was not too deep-seated.

Mather established his own business, accepting wool in payment for goods for a short time, and became a pillar of the respectable portion of society. However, he wanted to farm, and was disappointed when he was unable to obtain a land grant - which he applied for as soon as he arrived - because he was not prepared to live on his grant and sink all his capital into it. He gradually started to specialise in drapery in his shop. Several years later he did obtain his grant, at Muddy Plains; he called his property Lauderdale. He tried to establish a dairy farm, and put his money into draining the swamps on his land, but was unsuccessful and in 1836 was declared bankrupt. He made a fresh start in the drapery business the following year.[57]

Hopkins had no strong ambition to go on the land, for he was always a townsman. By 25th January 1823 he had opened up shop in his new premises, on the corner of Bathurst and Elizabeth Streets (the latter was the chief street for business), where he had acquired two rooms and a skilling, or lean-to shed, usually used as a kitchen.[58] This was probably similar to the house another emigrant, James Ross, rented when he arrived in the colony in the same year as Hopkins. Ross' board, two-room hut had an earth floor, a shingle roof, no ceiling, only one door, and was far from a bargain at 20/- per week.[59]

The Hopkins used one of their rooms as a bedroom, and the other as a sitting-room and shop, divided by a screen.[60] In the shop was a great variety of goods, from shoes, clothes and various items of ironmongery to

butter, cheese, snuff and raisins, for in the early days of the colony the problem for shopkeepers was not selling goods but obtaining goods to sell. So shops sold everything they could, and visitors compared them to village shops in England.

It was a situation with great potential, both for profit and for disaster. On the whole goods were scarce, and if a shopkeeper received a consignment of goods in great demand he could charge exorbitant rates and make a huge profit: Ross had to pay 10/- for a razor strop which cost 1/6 in London.[59] Generally speaking Ross found useful articles three and four times the price in England, and he describes large and quick returns for merchants. However, this depended on demand: if the consignment arrived after another shopkeeper had received similar goods, there would be a glut, and goods would not sell at cost price.

Writers tended to criticise merchants for their high prices, while admitting that the risks involved were enormous, and that without accurate information as to the state of the market people courted disaster by speculating.[61]

Mather described the merchant's difficulties.[62] Even though shops were generally open only between 10a.m. and 4p.m. the shopkeeper was continually busy, and it was almost necessary for two or three merchants to be in business together, as one was obliged to be constantly at the wharves to be the first to buy goods from incoming captains on their arrival, while hired help was expensive and unreliable. With such a large proportion of the population convicts or ex-convicts

petty crime was a problem; Mather said he was obliged to watch night and day, and had two men flogged for theft in twelve months. Hopkins' only recorded trouble was the theft of a coil of rope from his store in 1827.[63] A sudden stagnation hit the colony in 1823 when the Commissary demanded an enormous premium on Treasury Bills to send home to England, which brought dollars taken at 5/- down to 4/- or 4/2. Hard cash vanished and merchants had no money to buy with or remit but promissory notes.[62] The establishment of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land in 1823 eventually led to a more stable currency, but business was so chancy that 'many have been sold up and put into prison.'[62] From advertisements in the Gazette it can be seen that merchants often came and went quickly, though some remained over the years.

In this situation the skill of the merchant lay in anticipating shortages, and arranging to receive goods in demand before other merchants. Speculation could bring profits, but also sank to the ridiculous: the Gazette poured scorn on a man who in 1825 imported 500 barrels of shingle nails - 'Now really this is speculating.'[64] It estimated that all the buildings in Hobart would not use so many nails. The arrival of cargo vessels was vital, and family legend has it that Hopkins walked every morning to a corner of Argyle Street, from which he could see if a vessel were coming into harbour. His granddaughter wrote that he used to charter space in English ships to bring goods out, and that he began with a lucky cargo, either shoes or kettles or pots, which arrived when there was a scarcity of these goods

and gave him a very good start.[65] This could refer to the cargo of footwear he first brought out. Hopkins' obituarist was not content to give chance the credit for Hopkins' success: he wrote, 'By God's blessing upon Mr. Hopkins' thrift and industry when he commenced business on his own account he rapidly succeeded in accumulating wealth.'[66]

Hopkins' first advertisement for his own business appeared on 25th January 1823, when he advertised that on sale at Mr. Hopkins', Elizabeth-street, opposite the Coach and Horses, were hats, clothes, footwear, blankets, various hardware items, tools, hinges, butter, cheese and other foodstuffs, tobacco, candles and soap, with gentlemen's top boots and children's shoes made to order.[67] Unless he had picked up cobbling skills somewhere, he presumably employed a shoemaker. According to Mather's daughter, Hopkins at first obtained goods from a prominent wholesale merchant, Kemp; what could not be sold was returned to Kemp, and settlements were made every week.[68] This was a fairly secure system, but left little room for much profit by Hopkins, and by 1825 he was advertising that he was receiving goods 'by the latest arrivals', possibly direct from the ship.[69]

For some time in 1823 there is little mention of Hopkins; he is not recorded as subscribing money towards the Presbyterian minister's stipend (although the Hopkins attended the Presbyterian church), the Wesleyan Sunday School (although Hopkins had begun to teach there in December 1822), or the Church of England. He had nothing to do with the formation of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land, nor was he on the list of

colonists who wished Sorell to remain as Governor (although Mather was).[70] However, at the same time as the Deveron sailed Hopkins' name begins to appear. He finally gave £1 to the Wesleyan Sunday School (the Mather family gave £9/5/-), £1 to the Church of England, and £1 to a fund to provide for the widow and nine orphans of a Mr. Von Bibra, who had disappeared.[71] It is noticeable that though many donors gave in guineas, in these early days Hopkins gave in pounds.

In August Hopkins advertised a long list of goods for sale,[72] chiefly boots and shoes, clothes, ironmongery, non-perishable food, and including candles, wine and an assortment of books including Hume and Smollett's History of England, in twenty volumes; Don Quixotte (sic) in four volumes; Gifford's Complete English Lawyer; Aspin's Naval and Military Exploits; backgammon and draught-boards, with men; watercolours; oil colours; a case of drawing instruments; a flageolet with instructions; and Keith's Violin Preceptor. These are unusual items in advertisements at this time. Did Hopkins think that the colony needed them, did he expect them to sell well, or did he have no choice in what he sold? Records are so scanty that it is impossible to tell.

Another advertisement a week later was for a fresh assortment of ironmongery 'on the most reasonable terms', with still 'a great variety of school books and histories, a box of paints, and oil colours,' so it does not seem as if the books and paints had sold well.[73]

Hopkins never advertised similar stock again.

In November he tried a new venture, when he

advertised a smith's shop and tools, to be let or sold.[74] Over the next few years he similarly advertised several properties.

In 1824[75] there is little intimation in the Gazette of Hopkins' activities, though again his name does not appear in several lists. He was not a member of the Agricultural Society, has no mention in the lists of citizens welcoming Governor Arthur or thanking the King for establishing law courts. However, he heads the list of contributions towards the Presbyterian Church building fund with £5 (£2 being an average amount)[76] and a sign of his prosperity and respectability is that Government money lent to assist with the erection of the Church was lent on the bond of Hopkins and John Walker. This was in case the secretary of state should demand its repayment, for some considered that only the Church of England should be supported by the Government.[77] The church, St. Andrew's, was opened in September, and by December Hopkins and Walker were in charge of distributing the seats.[78] Hopkins' annual subscription to the church was one guinea.

Further religious activity is evinced in a report of a meeting of the Missionary Society. Despite incessant rain, there was, wrote the Colonial Times, 'a numerous assemblage of the most respectable Inhabitants of this Town, including a number of Ladies.' A report was read, some resolutions passed, liberal subscriptions given, and several speeches urged the necessity of working with convicts and with children. The speaker requested that a committee organise this latter venture, whereupon 'Mr. Hopkins requested that such gentlemen as

were desirous of aiding in the furtherance of this important object, would meet at his house accordingly.'[79]

Nothing seemed to eventuate from this suggestion, but it is noticeable that Hopkins' interest was with educating children, not convicts. There is little evidence that he was at all interested in assisting convicts; his belief was that one should help deserving cases to help themselves, and he saw providing education as the prime way of doing this.

Shortly after his arrival Hopkins had begun to teach at the Methodist Sunday School, whose aim was to teach children and illiterate adults reading and religious knowledge. Although the attendance records are not extant it seems his period as a teacher there was brief. He attended the first of the monthly Teachers' Meetings in October 1823, and offered his house for a future meeting, held in January 1824, but these were the only meetings at which he was present. After this his name is not mentioned in the minutes of meetings; while in the attendance roster for the meetings there is no comment after his meagre two Ps for Present, although other teachers are marked as'ill', 'moved', 'withdrawn' or even 'expelled'. Mrs. Hopkins, however, was invited to an anniversary Breakfast Meeting, examination of pupils and tea. Hopkins finally resigned in November 1824.[80]

During this year he was building a new store beside his former one, and in a lengthy advertisement in September (his only one for the year)[81] he thanked patrons for their liberal support since he began in business, then advertised his move, 'and that he has

greatly enlarged and well-selected his Stock-in-Trade from recent Arrivals, of the best Condition and Qualities, particularly in the Ironmongery and Hardware line, which he will sell on reasonable terms for ready money only, as under, viz:-' Here followed a long list of goods, largely ironmongery, but including marbles, dolls, haberdashery, tea, spices, a small cask of filbert nuts, French capers and mustard and smelling bottles with silver tops.

Although Hopkins had taken no part in the formation of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land, established in July 1823, he did purchase one of the seven hundred £200 shares, for two receipts are extant for the sixth and seventh instalments, each of twenty Spanish dollars.[82]

In 1825 Hopkins was among those who gave five guineas each towards buying some plate for a Lieut. Gunn in appreciation of his endeavours to catch bushrangers.[83] Hopkins was also present at a large and respectable meeting held to form a Religious Tract Society, to ameliorate the morals of the country.[84] Here he seconded a motion, and was one of the five members who could be applied to for subscription papers (two of the others were Ker, another merchant, and Mather). Every Sunday morning members distributed tracts, talked to the inhabitants about what they had been reading and collected old tracts. In 1831 Ross reported that this society was effective.[85]

In 1825 and 1826 goods were in short supply and the economic situation not encouraging (the Colonial Times referred in February 1826 to the 'present depressed state of the Colony'),[86] but this does not seem to have

affected Hopkins. In 1825 he sold £370 worth of goods, chiefly tools, paint, calico and thread, to the Government, and in 1826 over £600 worth of furniture, stationery and other goods.[87] He advertised a house to let, and still sold boots and shoes made to order, while a more unusual advertisement is for two large coppers, a Boiler, and a 'Distill with a head'.[88]

When Arthur began to print his own Hobart Town Gazette in 1825, and Andrew Bent started the Colonial Times in opposition, Hopkins advertised in both papers. On 3rd September he had a large advertisement, over a column long, in the Gazette,[89] while on the 2nd, 9th and 11th September he ran a column-long advertisement in the third, fourth and fifth issues of the Colonial Times[90] (all four being for his usual assortment of ironmongery, footwear, clothes and foodstuffs). The advertisements in the Colonial Times were among the first by merchants and by far the longest.

In several ways this was unusual behaviour for Hopkins. Up till now he had never run the same advertisement for three issues, indeed advertised comparatively rarely, sometimes only two or three times in a year. His action could be construed as support for Bent, at a time when Bent was in an insecure position and needed both financial and moral backing, and thus as support for the liberals against Arthur; but on the other hand Hopkins was a shrewd business man, and there is no other evidence to connect him with the anti-Arthur faction (except for vague statements made decades later that he was always on the liberal side of political affairs). Maybe Bent offered him a good price for the

advertisements. Besides, the fact that he was also advertising in the Gazette shows that he was keeping his options open: in December he again advertised here.[91]

When he applied unsuccessfully to Arthur for a land grant he gave a statement of capital: Iron £400; Ironmongery £1,200; Slops etc. £200; Cash £200; making a total of £2,000.[92] This would have been only a part of his estate, for he also had the value of his shop and land, his interest in any wool or ironmongery cargoes he might be dealing with, and his share in the Bank of Van Diemen's Land, making a total at least five times as much as the capital he had brought to the colony three years before. He might have borrowed money, but as he disliked being in debt and was very particular about paying bills on time a large debt appears unlikely. It seems that Hopkins was prospering, and mention of his patrons' liberal encouragement strengthens this view. Hopkins was now established as a Hobart merchant, one of the twelve or fourteen firms described by Widowson in 1826 as all 'conducted by gentlemen of the highest respectability. The sales of European goods are generally effected by giving a certain advance upon the invoice, in proportion as the goods are in demand or plentiful. This advance is seldom less than 50% and generally more.'[93] The days of enormous percentages were beginning to fade - it appears that Hopkins had done well out of them - but energetic merchants could still prosper.

In these years Hopkins played no discernable part in politics: probably his energies were all needed in his

expanding business. It is not known whether or not he employed assistance in his business, although if he was absent in the country somebody would have had to be in charge of the shop. This was unlikely to have been his wife Sarah, who was otherwise engaged in bearing children at eighteen-monthly intervals. Sarah Elizabeth joined her brother Henry in March 1824 and Mary Ann in September 1825.[94] The Hopkins were faced with a problem facing most colonial parents: with three infants Sarah Hopkins needed assistance, but free servants asked exorbitant wages and were difficult to get, while convicts, though cheaper and readily available, had dubious moral values. The Hopkins did use convict servants, and in 1825 one of these, twenty-nine year old Ann Darter, transported for life, absconded.[95] She was apprehended a fortnight later but did not stay long with the Hopkins, for in 1827 she again absconded, this time from the service of a Dr. Bromley.[96]

Although employers, the Hopkins' social position was low in these years. They were not entitled to join the highest social circles as they did not possess any of the attributes needed: birth, wealth, or a high position in the Government or armed forces. As far as the colonial papers were concerned, the dividing line came between those entitled to an 'Esquire' - W.A. Bethune Esq., A.F. Kemp Esq., who though merchants were gentlemen - and those called plain Mr. - Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Mather. (Beneath these were the unrespectable classes, who were given no title at all.) Another sign of the Hopkins' lack of social standing was that the births of their children were not reported

in the press, this honour being reserved for the upper classes.

Unfortunately Sarah Hopkins' diary does not exist for this period, and possibly she had no time to write one, with the children, the housekeeping, servants to train and supervise, her church interests, and having to cope with her husband's occasional absences. She had at least one good friend in Mary MacArthur, the wife of the Presbyterian minister, but generally speaking there was a lack of respectable women and with the overwhelming convict presence it must have been a struggle to bring up children in a decent God-fearing fashion. However, the Hopkins' experience in Shoreditch and Deptford must have prepared them for a depressing environment, while their increasing prosperity was encouraging.

Chapter 3

EXPANSION 1826-1830

In 1825 and 1826 the English wool market suffered a slump and the price of wool was halved. This was disastrous for many Hobart merchants, and when news arrived in August 1826 of the price received for wool sent in the Cumberland in 1825 there was widespread gloom.[1] Wool bought in the colony for 7d per pound sold in England for 5d. The total loss was estimated at over £8,000, with several merchants losing heavily: Bunster lost £2,000 and Bethune £500. Three other merchants were named: they did not include Hopkins and it seems fairly certain that he sent little if any wool by the Cumberland. The Gazette blamed the filthy condition of the wool for the low prices.[1]

Despite this 1826 was a busy year for wool exporting. In the previous four years ten ships took wool to England, but this year eleven did so. For seven of the ships individual shippers are named, and from this it appears that Hopkins exported little wool. In April the Lang took 320 bales from nineteen shippers: Hopkins sent 6 bales,[2] while 5 other ships had no wool from him. Later in the year he exported 7 of the 147 bales carried by the Cape Packet.[3] The total number of exporters mentioned is 35 with farmers exporting their own wool, and merchants exporting wool bought from farmers. A noticeable feature is that frequently exporters or their relations accompanied the cargo to London,[4] a tedious necessity which Hopkins was fortunate to be able to

avoid.

In 1827 he had a larger share of the export trade; the Hugh Crawford took 214 bales in March, of which Hopkins sent 21,[5] while the Cumberland took 320, of which Hopkins sent 91.[6] For a third ship no details are given. The news from London was rather better, with prices up 10-20% and the demand and price both steady, especially for coarse wool, which was doing better than fine wool.[7] Merchants bought wool at a low price to recoup losses; generally 1½d to 4d per pound.[8] On top of this they had to pay freight, generally 2d per pound: the captain of the Cumberland asked 2½d, which infuriated the merchants (doubtless including Hopkins, the largest shipper) who beat him down to 2¼d.[9] Insurance cost a further 2½-3% of the value of the wool.[10] Thus for Hopkins to send a bale of wool to England on the Cumberland would cost the amount paid to the grower, approximately 3d, plus freight 2¼d, plus insurance, plus duty in London of 1d per pound: about 6½d per pound, plus handling in London. Any price received under 8d would bring only a small profit, and he would need to receive 11d or 1/- before substantial profits began to accumulate.

In 1828 Hopkins' share of the market is unknown. Prices and demand in England were good, while the quality and care of the wool was improving. However, while English reports praised some Van Diemen's Land wool, complaints about inadequate cleaning and packing continued.[11]

During these years the quantity of wool exported grew dramatically. Wool production rose as follows:-

1827 592,075lb

1828 606,372lb

1829 925,520lb

1830 993,979lb [12]

For the last two years Van Diemen's Land produced more wool than New South Wales, and by 1830 its wool was accepted in England as equal in quality to that of the mainland. The English market was by now assured, though still liable to fluctuations, and freight was down to 1¼d per pound, with total exporting costs 3¼d per pound[11] (that of German wool was 4½d). The wool trade was well established and good profits were at last coming in. Unfortunately Hopkins' part in this growth is difficult to establish as individual statistics are virtually non-existent. Against writers naming him as the chief wool exporter can be set the smallness of his export in 1826, but this could have been due to his shrewd appreciation of the market, and he does seem to have escaped the worst effects of the bad prices. Other exporters were gradually dropping out of the trade (Bethune, for example, went on the land, Bunster left the colony, some others were bankrupted) so by 1830 the competition had lessened while the amount of wool had grown enormously.

It was still an area in which his expertise was valuable and rare. Barnard remarks that up till the 1830s the standard of sorting in Australia was low, as frequently little was known about it:[13] here the experienced wool stapler must have had an edge over his competitors. Widowson, writing in 1829, observed: 'There is no article sent from the country that varies

so much in price as wool; this may be easily accounted for: a great deal has been sent home that has never defrayed the expenses of transit; while some have succeeded in obtaining a very handsome price.'[14] Unfortunately he gives no examples, but taking all the available evidence it does seem that Hopkins would have been included in the latter group. One of his obituarists wrote, 'as he had command of considerable means, he was enabled to secure a large portion of the season's crop, his speculations in this direction generally leading to a handsome profit.'[15] In a letter written in 1828 he and his wife refer to their cup running over with temporal supplies.[16]

In 1826 Hopkins was listed in the Tasmanian Almanack as an ironmonger and dealer,[17] and his shop must have taken up a good deal of his time. In January, February, March, August and November of this year he advertised that he had received extensive cargoes of ironmongery by recent arrivals.[18] He divided his patronage evenly between the two newspapers, and frequently ran advertisements for three issues. He also advertised several lots of land for sale (with Mather), houses to let,[19] and was involved in trading with Sydney. In September the Henry brought him 61 bars and 40 bundles of iron, and 4 packages; in December he received 3 cases of goods, and he also sent 4 cases of hardware to Sydney.[20] While not an extensive trade, it shows another field of interest.

1827 was a similar year, with advertisements in February, March and August.[21] Apart from ironmongery he was selling Irish linen and shirting, window glass,

sweet oils such as oil of roses and scented soaps, paint, bacon, and elegant Brussels carpeting, and ladies' satin shoes. His stock was still varied, and he sold it for ready money or wool. He sent more goods to Sydney: in August 17 cases of goods, and in March 3 casks of hardware, 2 casks of copperas and one case of Epsom Salts.[22]

In 1828 he sold an even greater variety of goods, including dyes: 'Ground Ebony, Shumac, Borax, Copperas, Fustic, Logwood.'[23] In August he had Bath bricks and 'coffin furniture',[24] while an advertisement largely for snuff concludes that 'Mr. H. begs to return thanks to the Public, for the very liberal support he has hitherto met with, and is happy to inform them, that having made arrangements to receive a regular supply of Goods direct from England, he will be able to supply them at a much lower rate than heretofore.'[25] This was a real coup, though unfortunately no actual prices are given. The profits of a business in Hobart are shown when Dunn, a merchant who had also come out on the Heroine, sold his shop. The average return for the previous five years was £12,000 per annum,[26] a good turnover.

As a businessman, Hopkins was alert, ready to make the most of any opportunity. In 1829 four Hobart merchant houses complained to the Governor of the injustice of private tenders. 15 tons of iron had been bought by the Government for £17 a ton, and the merchants claimed they could have supplied it at £15 a ton. The reply stated that when Mr. Hopkins submitted his tender, there was an immediate need for iron, so his tender appeared highly eligible and was accepted. On another

occasion, continued the letter, tenders had been called for 2½ tons and Mr. Hopkins (at £17/10/-) submitted the only tender; the four merchants had not then been so keen.[27]

Hopkins was still letting the occasional house, and another area of interest is shown by a legal advertisement asking if anyone can give a reason why the goods, chattels and credits of Thomas Abrahams, settler, deceased, of the Lake River, should not all go to Henry Hopkins, creditor of Abrahams. A further example of Hopkins' range of activities is his advertisement that he wants to buy a thousand kangaroo skins, presumably for export.[28]

At this time Henry Savery, a convict writer, published a series of articles about Hobart identities (later published as The Hermit of Van Diemen's Land). The portraits tend to be satirical and rather unkind, and that of Hopkins was no exception:

'HOBART TOWN, JULY 31, 1829.

Having occasion one day last week to make a trifling purchase, I entered a shop in Elizabeth-street, and, having obtained what I required, was about to leave it, when my notice was attracted by the manner in which another customer was being served at the same moment. He had asked for a pound of sugar, which was weighed, and then deliberately turned out upon the counter, the purchaser instantly proceeding to fill his pockets with it, just as it had left the scales. "Do not you provide a wrapper for what you sell?" I enquired. The shop-keeper, a spare thin man, of a very vinegar aspect, looking like a "Praise-God barebones", who had been

taking physic, stroked his chin, and with a demure expression, under which much was conveyed, replied, "Our profits won't allow it." "Why, the article I have bought is at least three times what its price would be in the dearest shop in London. What can constitute this immense difference?" "Our profits won't allow paper," was the only reply I could again receive. Presently a fat middle-aged female in great dishabille, approached the shop from a neighbouring public-house, and entering with a semivole, and, throwing some money on the counter, said, in a tone and style which could only have been acquired by a long acquaintance with Billingsgate, "Give me some tea and sugar." "What have you to put them in, my good woman?" "None of your good woman for me, d- your eyes." at the same moment stooping to draw off a dirty stocking from a dirtier foot, "here's a leg'll bear looking at - and here's something'll hold the tea and sugar," handing over the stocking, into which the sugar was first placed, and then tying it in the middle with the woman's garter, so as to form a division for the sugar, she received her change and left the shop.'[29]

This article, accepted as a description of Hopkins by the modern editors of Savery's book, can be seen as a spiteful diatribe by a gentleman unsuccessful in business and fallen on hard times against a plebeian now flourishing. (Mather fared no better, being accused of cringing civility, sly humility and prying inquisitiveness.)[30] However, to be recognisable this description of Hopkins must have held grains of truth. In order to do so well from such small original capital Hopkins must

have been very shrewd, with a careful eye to his profits, while the stocking story exemplified (if exaggerated) his actions. This portrait of Hopkins is borne out by his obituarist's description that he was in his best days a shrewd, far-seeing man of business, quick to turn an occasion to account, yet honourable and fair; and that he eagerly pursued wealth, and pushed his business on every hand.[31] Other writers added: 'His success in life has been great and marked; and that fact is the just reward, as it was the natural result, of the energy, activity and honourable punctuality which characterised all his business relations.'[32] Similarly, his 'careful attention to business and his unswerving rectitude,' and his 'energetic business habits and strict integrity of purpose'[33] were praised. All these reports add up to a picture of a very active man, enthusiastic in the pursuit of success and careful of every penny on the way; but however shrewd he was about money he was invariably praised for his honesty and integrity.

As Savery discusses relatively few Hobart merchants, his articles also suggest that Hopkins was one of the best known figures on the Hobart mercantile scene. One of his first public actions was in 1826, when he helped to deal with a currency crisis.[34] The problem was a shortage of shillings and sixpences, usually dealt with by merchants issuing promissory notes (one by Hopkins for a shilling dated 1825 is extant).[35] However, by then a third of the notes in circulation were estimated to be forgeries, and a group of eight merchants, including Hopkins and Mather, met to discuss the problem. They decided to issue £600 worth of half-crown, shilling and

sixpenny notes, by twelve individuals chosen by ballot from among all respectable traders. In the event promissory notes worth less than 20/- were made illegal in this year.[34]

In this period merchants were an important group in the community: indeed, according to Hartwell, they were the most influential class.[36] Widowson wrote in 1829 that the general merchant firms were all 'conducted by gentlemen of the highest respectability.'[37] Merchants tended to have many functions and many interests: Barnard comments that many early wool exporters were general import-export merchants whose interests covered the whole range of the colonies' imported requirements, and gives Hopkins as an example.[38] He continues that wool brought sterling funds otherwise obtained only with difficulty, and this was the main motive of merchant buyers in the 1820's and 1830's. The direct purchase of wool bills and wool was an essential incident to importing. Wool bills were relatively cheap during the short exporting season, but they fell due in London within a similarly short period. An evenly distributed flow of cheap foreign exchange might be acquired by purchasing bills at their cheapest, buying wool at the height of the season and shipping it to arrive at staggered intervals after the bills fell due, and then buying more wool towards the end of the selling season to provide funds when exchange was most difficult to obtain. Not only importers but anyone with funds to remit to England found wool attractive as the vehicle. Wool, as distinct from wool bills, also had speculative gain.[39]

With these advantages, plus his own experience with wool, Hopkins was well placed, and it was at this time that he developed his highly lucrative trade cycle. He sent wool to England, invested the proceeds in ironmongery, imported this to Van Diemen's Land and here sold it. In this way his capital was never idle, and according to family tradition, at some unspecified date he was doubling his money every nine months.[40] Unfortunately there are no exact figures, but from other evidence he was doing well by 1830. He was a good example of the right man in the right place at the right time; selling ironmongery in Hobart needed some acumen, but only a man with Hopkins' experience could know the quality of a fleece and handle it correctly.

However busy Hopkins was with his mercantile interests there was one thing he considered more important - his religious beliefs and consequent responsibilities. He regarded his earnings as a trust and a stewardship held from God, and as he became wealthier the ten per cent he had vowed to donate to philanthropic causes became a considerable sum. In 1826 the Van Diemen's Land Auxiliary Mission Society was formed by the Presbyterian Church, and Hopkins was chosen Treasurer, the first of many such positions he was to hold. The Society's aim was to collect money to send to missionary societies in England and it had an ingenious way of doing this: for an annual subscription of 5/- one became a member, 10/- procured a place on the committee, £1 a vote at committee meetings and for £5 one received life membership. As Treasurer Hopkins may have propounded this scheme, but two years later the

Society returned to the more usual one of voluntary subscriptions. Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins each gave one guinea, while Master Hopkins, aged five, gave 5/-.[41] At the Annual Meeting several animated speakers reminded members that the object of the Society was to send 'Heralds of the Prince of Peace to proclaim the Glad Tidings of Salvation to the ends of the earth.' The Courier obviously considered that Van Diemen's Land was the ends of the earth, and complained that the Society was sending to England money which could well be used in Hobart, Maria Island, the Bass Strait Islands, or among the aborigines, for in all these areas 'the field is large and full of weeds, rampant for want of the husbandman.'[42]

In 1829 the Society held the first meeting in Australia specifically in the interests of the London Missionary Society: this society was one of Hopkins' favourites, and he gave £20, while £106 was raised altogether.[43]

Hopkins was still a supporter of the Presbyterian Tract Society and liked this to be known. A newspaper report of the Society named the committee and distributors - not including Hopkins - and gave his subscription as 10/-. In the next issue of the paper the report was reprinted, exactly the same except that Hopkins was included as a committee member and distributor, and his subscription was given as one guinea.[44]

In 1828 Hopkins was one of a numerous and respectable meeting of the Friends of Religion which formed the interdenominational Van Diemen's Land Seamen's Friend Society and Bethel Union, to spread religious instruction

among visiting sailors, by preaching on ships and giving out tracts and bibles. Hopkins was on the committee, and this society did energetic work, giving out 5-6,000 tracts and visiting 68 ships in its first year.[45]

In 1828 for the first time there is evidence of Hopkins' political views. He joined 48 other signatories in a petition. 'We beg leave, very strongly, though respectfully, to recommend Mr. Bent's accompanying application to be allowed to receive a Licence to print and publish a Newspaper to the favourable consideration of His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Arthur.'[46]

He did not, however, contribute (openly at least) to a fund to assist Andrew Bent in his struggle against Arthur, and the only evidence of Hopkins' political activity during Arthur's rule was in 1834, when his name is fifth in a list of thirty-seven signatures on a petition drawn up at a public meeting, demanding trial by jury.[47]

Politically Hopkins may well have had mixed views. Arthur had many qualities which appealed to the historian John West, whose opinions were much the same as those of his friend, supporter and co-religionist Hopkins. West criticised Arthur's authoritarianism and restriction of freedom of the press, but praised his energy, efficiency and encouragement of religion, respectability and industry. 'The impressions of devout men were usually favourable to Arthur,'[48] he wrote, and this group would surely have included Hopkins.

A hint of Hopkins' approval of Arthur came in 1831, when he called his newly-born son Arthur. The Hopkins

children seem to have been called after a specific person, and there appear to be no other Arthurs in Henry or Sarah's families, so this may indicate a positive opinion of the Governor. However, Hopkins did stay out of politics. His growing business and philanthropic work must have taken up most of his time, and he may have had little energy for an interest in politics, while another possible reason is his lack of social standing. Most of those involved in politics were 'gentlemen', and men of a lower rank were not encouraged to enter the field.

Despite the lack of interest in Hopkins on the part of the government and social elite, he was gaining the material indicators of a successful man. At some stage during this period the family moved to the large and imposing Kent House in Patrick Street; this was a sure sign of wealth. Their second son John Rout Hopkins (named after Sarah's brother) was born in 1828, bringing their family to four. Sarah Hopkins' diaries are once more extant, but give very little general information, apart from various children's baptisms or illnesses, and her own occasional diseases and feelings of melancholy. In November 1826 she mentions being in the country[49] and this may be one of the earliest visits to Hestercombe at Austin's Ferry, ten miles up the Derwent, where the Hopkins became regular visitors.

Occasional comments on society around her are not enthusiastic. In 1826 she told God that though there were some converts 'thou hast a great work to do in this place,' and in 1828 she comments that 'God's name is so sinfully taken in vain in this place,' this 'land of

darkness and wilful ignorance' where there were 'many open sinners.'[50] Even church members needed improvement; 'went to church with my mind much depressed about the present state of the congregation ... O that some who heard the sermon may seek in earnest true repentence,' and 'O for the conversion of sinners amongst us - this would give more joy than when our corn and wine increase.'[51] Her only other references to increasing material goods was to 'the innumerable mercies my God is continually bestowing on me, both of a temporal and spiritual nature.'[52] In 1830 she speaks of having more time for reading than she had for seven years past[53] (since Henry's birth, in other words), possibly because the improved financial position meant more and better servants could be employed.

So by 1830 Hopkins was established as a prosperous merchant and wool exporter in Hobart, and as a pillar of several respectable societiés. Although still fairly low on the social scale (though neither he nor his wife appear to have sought social success, particularly in the early years) from outward appearances the family was flourishing.

Chapter 4

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The Hopkins' religious observances had been variable, depending on circumstances. On their arrival they had worshipped with the Wesleyans,[1] these being the only non-conformists with a church in Hobart, but when a Presbyterian minister, Archibald Macarthur, arrived at the end of 1822 they joined his church.[2] They were extremely impressed with his sermons: 'How inestimable the priviledge of hearing the gospel faithfully preached!' wrote Sarah Hopkins in 1826.[3] When Macarthur was away in Launceston, Mr. Hopkins read a sermon at home. The Macarthurs soon became personal friends of the Hopkins.

From 1827 to 1830 Sarah Hopkins' diary is largely made up of descriptions of the sermons she heard and her reaction to them. Nearly all were delivered by Macarthur, and they show that, although he preached occasionally on justification by faith and salvation by free grace, the majority of his sermons were on comforting subjects. Many described the joys of heaven and several times Macarthur gave such a delightful view of a Christian's deathbed that Sarah longed for hers. She describes sermons as consoling, grand, encouraging and constructive; Macarthur saw man in a positive light, and frequently pointed out that whatever trials might befall his congregation, God would deliver them from their enemies, and that God gives grace equally to the moral and the guilty.[4] Sarah Hopkins considered Macarthur's

ministrations 'very superior to the common order of preaching.'[5]

Despite their high opinion of Macarthur, the Hopkins missed their own church. The Congregational (or Independent) church had been formed in the seventeenth century, and consisted of individual congregations, each independent of any outside authority, and whose actions were decided on by all church members. The minister had influence but less direct power than in most other churches. Congregationalists liked a plain religion without ritual, and believed that theirs was the church organisation most like that advocated in the New Testament, that all hierarchy was inessential, and that the church must be independent of the State so that it could retain its own independence. The Presbyterian church, though similar in many ways, accepted State assistance and had several differences in organisation, and the Hopkins had wanted to establish a branch of their own church ever since they arrived in Van Diemen's Land. They are said to have written several times to London requesting a minister; the only letter extant is one written to the London Missionary Society in 1828.

'To the Secretary of the London Missionary Society.

Rev^{d} and dear Sir,

We take the liberty to address you on a subject upon which our minds have for some time been engaged.

It is our desire, should it be the will of God, in the order of his providence, to have another minister in Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land; for which we will give you some reasons.

We have resided here upwards of six years, during which time the inhabitants have been rapidly increasing in numbers. - The parish church, which is on the north side of the town, is tolerably well attended on the Sabbath; - we have also a Wesleyan Chapel, and a Presbyterian Church on the west side; but the other parts of the town are left without any place of worship except the Roman Catholic Chapel; and the people, in general, have so little concern for their souls that they would not walk any distance to hear a preached Gospel which makes it necessary to carry it almost to their doors. - A great part of our population are free by servitude; consequently, they are not <u>obliged</u> to attend any place of worship; and the most part live in the total neglect of the Sabbath.-

We do not expect you to support a Missionary here, as tho' he were sent to the heathen; but that you will favour us so far as to provide the passage for a Minister, & assist us in building a chapel.

With regard to the support of a Minister, as the God of providence has made our cup to run over with temporal supplies, we should feel it a privilege to provide him with a comfortable home in our own family, until he has sufficient from his congregation to supply his necessities.

So far as we know ourselves, our chief motive in wishing for another Minister is, to promote the glory of God in the conversion of souls; and should but <u>one</u> be rescued from destruction and placed within the fold, it will be a high reward to him who may be the means, and to us, who are permitted to make use of the talent

our Lord has lent us in promoting his glory. - We have made it a matter of earnest prayer to be directed in this instance; - and the same power that has directed us to make this request to you, will, no doubt, prepare the mind of some good man to engage in his service in this place, should it be his will that one should come.- May God the Spirit enable each of us to do his will, that we may not run before we are sent, or tarry behind when we are bid to go forward.'[6]

The letter was signed by Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins.

The London Missionary Society decided it could not act in the matter and passed the letter on to the Congregational theological establishment of Highbury College. A young trainee named Miller, preparing to go to America, felt called to go to Van Diemen's Land. When he was ordained and had to explain his theological convictions, Miller said he had lived without God for the first nineteen years of his life, Satan's instruments being the theatre, popular novels and the poems of Lord Byron. He had been converted to an ardent and zealous Calvinism, believing that it was impossible for man to be justified in the sight of God by his own efforts, with a deep conviction of the entire corruption of the human race and the need of salvation: 'that the Salvation of the righteous is wholly of the Lord, and that the perdition of the wicked is wholly of themselves.'[7]

Miller then married his cousin, and, having had his passage arranged and other assistance provided by Sarah Hopkins' brother John Rout, proceeded to Van Diemen's Land. The Millers arrived in September 1830,

full of zeal to 'proclaim salvation by Christ to the people in this land of darkness and wilful ignorance.'[8] It was a daunting prospect, in a place where only 25% of the inhabitants went to church, and the clergyman found himself in a largely convict society, 'in the very gorge of sin, in the midst of the general receptacle for the worst characters in the world,' and must 'grapple at the very gates of hell, if he would rescue a soul from the headlong rush to which he is hurrying.'[9]

The Millers were welcomed hospitably by the Hopkins: there was no need for them to reside with the family, however, for a nearby house had become vacant and the Hopkins had furnished it with some of their own belongings.[10] Once the Millers were settled in, a meeting was held at the Hopkins house on 12th October, and it was agreed to use a large room for services, while a subscription list was opened to build a chapel. Hopkins stood at the head of the list with £200 (more than a workman's wages for a year) and it was hoped to raise £2,000.[11]

Miller preached on 10th October, holding three services with over thirty people present:[12] Sarah Hopkins recorded hearing a 'faithful impressive sermon.'[13] She continued to attend the Presbyterian church, however, and brief descriptions of Miller's sermons are a far cry from lengthy praise of Macarthur's. Miller drew good crowds: within a few weeks he had 'most crowded, and highly respectable congregations,' with two hundred at an evening service.[14]

In September 1831 Miller opened a little chapel, 'which' wrote Sarah Hopkins, 'we have built, to accommo-

date those who are most remote from other places of worship.'[15] This was the Berea Street chapel on the corner of Berea and Liverpool Streets, a lower-class area, and a Sunday School was soon begun. From now on Miller took one service here each Sunday, and two in the original large room, presumably for the 'highly respectable' members of his congregation. Even in the evangelical Congregational church there was an emphasis on respectability, and respectable churchgoers did not wish to mix with the working-class inhabitants of the Berea Street area.

In October 1831 Miller proposed that a Congregational church be formed. The Hopkins had a difficult decision. 'We have communicated with the Presbyterian church for seven years, and now that there is a church of our own denomination about to be formed, we know not whether to form a part of it or not. We think but little of the non-essentials of church government; yet we believe that the churches called Congregational are most consistent with Scripture, and to those we are attached from birth, education, and conscientious principles; yet we wish to be all one with others who are in Christ Jesus,' wrote Sarah Hopkins.[16]

In March 1832 a meeting took place of all those who had been members of Congregational churches in England; eight people, including the Hopkins and their sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Hopkins. A church was formed, with Miller as pastor.[17]

Rules were drawn up by Miller, Hopkins, and the other male Congregationalist, concerning admission to the church. New members had to give satisfactory

evidence of their doctrinal sentiments, religious experience and moral conduct. They must believe absolutely in justification by faith and the total and universal depravity of the human race, reject all dependence on good deeds to achieve immortality, and forsake all sinful practices and irreligious companions.[18] There were a number of new admissions over the following months, with Hopkins frequently asked by the church to visit candidates and establish their religious position.[19]

The Brisbane Street chapel, for the respectable members of the church and in a respectable area, was opened in April 1832. The Colonial Times praised the Independents: the Church of England was very slow in getting around to building a church, but the fewer Independents had erected a handsome and spacious chapel in a remarkably short time.[20]

Miller was full of zeal and very energetic. Young, refined, somewhat retiring and inclined to be delicate, he must have been appalled by the general life of Hobart, where drunkenness was prevalent and licentiousness rife. An anonymous description of him runs, 'If he was not righteous overmuch, he allowed his zeal to overrun his discretion, and by attempting more than his strength could endure, his nerves became shattered, his usefulness impared, and his life shortened.'[21] George Clarke later described him as being zealous in his care of convicts,[22] but there is no contemporary evidence of this work. Miller gives the impression of being full of the enthusiasm of the convert, without Macarthur's more moderate and encouraging views: at any rate, Sarah

Hopkins decided she preferred Macarthur, and in November 1832 wrote to the church:-

'You will oblige me by stating to the next Church-meeting that it is my wish to become an occasional communicant with them instead of being a full member. - I have now attended the Ministry of the rev^{d} Mr. Macarthur for nearly ten years, and cannot make up my mind to leave it after hearing profitably for so long a time. [Erased - and although you approve of my attending once on the Sabbath] Yet I am aware that there must be an apparent inconsistency in my attending but once while a member of the church under your care, - and this, connected with my not being able to attend any of the evening services, has occasioned me to decide on leaving the church. - At the same time I hope to feel an equally deep interest in everything that concerns the church, and to continue to pray for her spiritual peace and prosperity.

I remain dear Sir

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hopkins'[23]

For Sarah Hopkins to have written this letter there must have been considerable discussion and soul-searching in the family, and her decision to leave (and her original signing of the 1828 letter in conjunction with her husband) show that she had independence and a force of her own, and was not content merely to follow him. The real reason for her leaving the church is unclear. Why did she underline 'profitably' - does this imply that she found Miller's discourses unprofitable? It can be inferred that she disliked his strong Calvanist

doctrine of justification by faith alone, believing in the importance of good works, and that she preferred Macarthur's gentler brand of Christianity. Clearly she admired Macarthur personally, and was possibly strongly influenced by his sex-charisma.

For some time the Hopkins household was divided, with Sarah a Presbyterian and Henry a Congregationalist. He continued to be an active church member, visiting candidates for admission in December, January and February; by now there were thirty-five members.[24] However, fresh difficulties then arose concerning Miller. He was thrown from a horse, and received a violent contusion on the head. He was diagnosed as suffering from 'thickening of the coats of the brain', a condition which could lead to insanity, and to recuperate took a trip to Sydney in April. On his return he was annoyed to find that his congregation had not been carrying on his work to his satisfaction - they had omitted the afternoon service, for one thing - and became upset and ill. He wrote that he appeared well, and could understand that the 'painful paroxysms of temporary phrensy to which I am subject could be thought of as affectation,' and in any case were liable to be regarded in an unfavourable light.[25] A letter written at this time to the newly-formed Congregational Church in Sydney ran ' It is our prayer that no root of bitterness may spring up among you' and was signed by Miller, Hopkins and two others;[26] on 1st October Miller opened the little church at Hestercombe, Austin's Ferry, built by Hopkins for the family to attend when they were on holidays there.[27] It is an unusual church in that it

has a fireplace, doubtless necessary in view of the bodily afflictions, including rheumatism, from which Sarah Hopkins suffered. The Hestercombe church is now the oldest Congregational church in Australia.

However, Hopkins now decided that he too preferred the Presbyterians to Miller's brand of Congregationalism, being not the man to put up with affectation, apparent or otherwise. On October 1833 he wrote a letter similar to his wife's.

'Hobart Town 3 October 1833
To the Rev^{d} F. Miller and the Church under
his care
My Dear Christian Friends,

You will, most of you remember what was stated by our minister some time since of the necessity and importance of the members of the church attending regular on the ministry of their Pastor - which I certainly think is the duty of those who join church communion - and it is also known to many of you that I have for many years sat under the ministry of Rev A Mcarthur and I must say that I feel much attach' to his ministry feeling therefor the inconsistency of being a member of this church and attending partly Rev A Mcarthur ministry I beg leave to withdraw from being a ful member but if you think proper shall be happy to be considerd an occasional communcant with this church and shall at all times feel deeply interested in her welfare - praying that the Lord may abundantly bless you I remain

you sincerly
in Christn Bond H Hopkins.'[28] (sic)

He may also have disliked the actions taken by the church. Twice church members married spouses considered by the church to be not sufficiently Christian; both had their sin pointed out in no uncertain terms and both resigned from the church (one to join the Hopkins with the Presbyterians). Under similar circumstances members left the church due to intemperance; immoral conduct; dishonourable transactions in business and neglecting family worship; violating the Sabbath day by opening their house for traffic on the Lord's Day; views on baptism and the conduct of church members, and defects in the constitution of the church; absenting themselves from public worship; and dislike of a sermon on the text 'My sheep know my voice and are known of me.' Those people who repented of their sins had to do so publicly.[29] Although these events happened after the Hopkins left the church, presumably the tendency and atmosphere were present while they were members. In 1834 Miller preached a sermon against the theatre, saying, according to the Courier, that one must give up the Bible or the theatre, and that those who supported the theatre were if not criminal at least sinful. The Courier gently queried the right of Miller to judge this question.[30]

Sarah Hopkins' diary recommences in 1834, with descriptions of delightful and encouraging sermons by Macarthur, once more largely on the love of Christ for his people, and the joys of eternal life, although one was on the dangers of prosperity. 'I sometimes feel prosperity to be indeed a strong temptation to worldly thoughts,' she commented.[31] Occasionally she heard a sermon by Miller, where mostly only the text and no

description is given. She also attended other churches: Wesleyan, Baptist, Anglican (where fortunately she heard a 'faithful evangelical discourse') and services taken by a Mr. Dove ('but our own dear Pastor would have gone much deeper into the subject') and a Mr. Irvine ('too little food for the soul').[32]

Hopkins also continued as a trustee of the Brisbane Street church. This had a £600 debt, and the trustees suggested that £1,000 be applied for from the Government. £500 was granted and Hopkins and Jennings, two of the trustees, were securities for the amount, in case the money was recalled. However, another Congregationalist minister visited Miller and his remarks on the acceptance of State aid persuaded Miller not only to decline a Government stipend of £200 but to regard the £500 as a loan. Repayment dragged on for years, and it was not until 1855 that a £50 gift from Hopkins finally cleared the debt.[33]

Hopkins still kept in touch with Miller's church, and in 1834 presented it with a communion service, accompanied by a scrawled note. 'Mr H Hopkins presents is christian regards to the Rev Mr Miller and the church under is care and request their acceptence of the communion service as a token of regard with his earnest prayer that the Lord may abundantly them by ading to ther number of such as shall be saved on the day of the Lord.'(sic)[34]

All was not well with the Presbyterian church, and by 1835 Macarthur was having a difficult time. Sarah Hopkins hints at his trials. 'Our dear Minister spoke of the church having the candlestick removed ... how

did my soul tremble for him who labours in so much weakness amongst us... in this wicked place.'[35] One problem was that his wife was dying; another that his ordination was found to be irregular; and when Lang came down from Sydney to investigate this he found that charges had been made against Macarthur gravely affecting his moral character, and that he admitted guilt: apparently he had been consoling widows too ardently, while it has been suggested that he was the father of an illegitimate child.[36] On 1st November 1835 Sarah Hopkins wrote, 'This is the most melancholy Sabbath I have ever yet known, our church is this morning to be declared vacant, and the mouth of our Pastor is shut for a time through an act of impropriety which he has committed although without any evil or improper design but the wicked appear to triumph for a time in this distressing case.'[37] The unfortunate Macarthur, who for some time had been preaching sermons on texts like 'And God shall wipe away all tears from thine eyes,' lost his wife in December. As she died she consigned her four children to Sarah Hopkins' care, but the family left Hobart soon afterwards. This double misfortune greatly upset the Hopkins and left them uncertain 'where, and under whom we should be settled again.'[38] By November they had given up their connection with the Presbyterians.[39]

Fortunately they could once more turn to the Congregationalists. Miller's health had seemed to be breaking up and he had been obliged to ask for a four-month suspension of his church duties. Another minister was requested from England, and the Rev. John Nisbet

arrived in Hobart in August 1835. The Hopkins first heard him preach that month on the text 'I am the good shepherd,' and the next week on Eternal Life. No wonder Sarah Hopkins thought his preaching much like Macarthur's.[40] However, by now Miller was much better and not at all eager to be supplanted by the newcomer, who took up duties at the Hestercombe chapel. When the Macarthur upset occurred Nisbet was there. In December, the Hopkins moved to Hestercombe to be near Nisbet's chapel, and Sarah Hopkins wrote, 'Thou hast shewn us in the providence in sending Thy young servant to us just in this time of need when deprived of our own Pastor.'[41] Nisbet quickly became 'Our dear young minister', giving delightful and comforting sermons. (Miller, on the other hand, gave a sermon to the unconverted, telling them they would be burned up as chaff.)[42] Nisbet began preaching in the Berea Street chapel in February - this chapel belonged to the Hopkins - and the congregation was 'tolerably good for the first time,' or, in other words, small.[43] He had resided for some months with the Hopkins, and 'our minds were leaning towards him,' so in March 1836 Hopkins decided to build a chapel for him.[44] Four people met at Hopkins' home to form a new Congregational church, and Nisbet preached on the appropriate text of 'Fear not, little flock.'[45] By the end of the year the congregation numbered seventeen, including Sarah's brother William Rout and his wife, and in January 1837 Hopkins' new Ionic-style chapel in Collins Street was opened.[46] Again the Berea Street chapel was not good enough for the respectable congre-

gation; in fact Sarah Hopkins wrote of the Berea Street area as 'the abodes of wickedness and ignorance in that dark spot.'[47]

From Sarah Hopkins' diary it seems clear that she and her husband desired Macarthur and Nisbet's loving, hopeful Christianity rather than Miller's sterner brand where man's sinfulness was constantly emphasised. Nisbet too quite frequently exhorted the unconverted, but he was generally far less Calvanistic and more tolerant: no members were excommunicated from his church for marrying non-Congregational spouses. Besides this there seems to have been a far greater degree of personal liking for Macarthur and Nisbet than for the querulous Miller.

When the new church was formed, however, Miller was full of Christian affection and proposed joint monthly meetings to cultivate a spirit of union and love, and also meetings at the same time as the Sydney congregation, so that they could all pray simultaneously - the Sydney congregation was divided. In 1837 a Congregational Union was formed, to embrace all Van Diemen's Land churches, to discuss matters of common interest:[48] this was only a few years after the first Congregational Union was established in England, so shows considerably advanced thinking and a readiness to accept new ideas. Hopkins was the treasurer, and very active in the Union from the start.

One of the first of his proposals was to establish a school, for both boys and girls, in connection with the Union; nothing came of this.[49] In 1838 he offered land and premises for a Theological Academy,[50] for he

realised that one of the chief disadvantages of a colonial church was its unsure supply of ministers, while those who did come were not necessarily of the highest calibre. Nothing came of this proposal either - not surprisingly, as there were still so few Congregationalists in the colony to support such an establishment: however, if Hopkins had such expansive ideas in business as he had in religion it is not surprising that he did so well so fast. He made sporadic attempts over the next thirty years to establish the college, and this also demonstrates his determination. His other activities in the Union were more successful. He was involved in establishing small chapels in four country areas, attempted to organise a burying-ground, and tried to heal the breach which had arisen in Launceston between the Reverends Price (who had established the first church) and West (who wanted to establish a second):[51] similar to the Miller-Nisbet situation, and a problem endemic in a church with no central control.

By 1839 the Hopkins were settled in the church they desired. In turn they had repudiated Methodism, the degree of central control and lack of lay activity of the Presbyterians, and Miller's Calvinism, for Nisbet's brand of Congregationalism. This consisted of the individual congregations with all members participating in church government, a central tenet of the church, with a mild evangelical outlook with equal emphasis on justification by faith and good works. For the Hopkins, who supported individual political freedom, the individual's right to police his own life was important, and they obviously wished for a church where they could

be full members participating in all church decisions yet able to run their own lives as they chose without church surveillance. The structure, or lack of it, of the Congregational church meant that it encompassed doctrinal divergence, and the Hopkins' activities show that a wealthy church member could influence the development of a local congregation by ensuring a position for a minister whose doctrinal views he supported.

The Hopkins, keen philanthropists, were also convinced of the growing humanist belief in ultimate reward for those who do good, and influenced the Congregational church away from Miller's Calvinism, which emphasised predestination. The Hopkins' beliefs were better suited to the expanding, active society of Hobart, where many successful merchants had time and money for good works, and where these good works were in demand, with so many convicts, ex-convicts, children of convicts and new settlers needing assistance. By directing Congregationalism in this direction the Hopkins helped to create the atmosphere for the strong vein of non-conformist philanthropy which greatly influenced the colony for the rest of the century.

Chapter 5

CONSOLIDATION 1831-1839 AND ENGLAND 1839-1842

While Hopkins' religious activities are well documented, records of his economic activities in the 1830's are scarce. He continued with his two enterprises, his wool exporting and retailing of ironmongery, and apparently prospered at both. Wool was doing particularly well in the early 1830's, and while Van Diemen's Land production was fairly static at around 1.5 million pounds per year, (and was again less than New South Wales),[1] the price of wool in England doubled in the two years up to 1834, with merchants paying 14 to 16 pence per pound and obtaining from 18 to 25 pence in London.[2] This meant trade worth roughly £130,000 a year, a large percentage of the colony's income, and a good profit for the colony's few wool exporters.

However, 1835 brought financial crisis and general depression with many bankruptcies, banks refusing discounts, a drought and a fall of 50% in the English wool price.[3] The difficulties lasted till 1836 (with the Colonial Times claiming that half the colonists were insolvent)[4] but boom conditions in England once more led to record wool returns in this year. Any elation at this was premature, for in 1837 the wool price dropped again, which led to another depression and more failures and bankruptcies. 1839 and 1840, however, were good years again.[5]

How Hopkins fared in this complicated situation is

unknown, but by now his interests were diversified, and there is no evidence that he suffered severely in any of the depression years. Unlike some other merchants he also avoided disaster by insuring his ships. In 1833 the loss of the barque Science off Cape Horn on her homeward journey with all her cargo was reported: Hopkins had been a large shipper but had been sufficiently insured, while another shipper, Meredith, was only partly insured so suffered considerable losses.[6] Insurance companies were founded in Van Diemen's Land in the mid-1830's, but there is no evidence that Hopkins had anything to do with their establishment.

His day books survive for two brief periods, 13-11-1838 to 23-2-1839, and 28-8-1839 to 25-11-1839.[7] There are various entries for each day, with either a number beside each and occasionally 'old ledger', or else 'paid'. The earlier period was a very busy one, with up to sixteen entries a day and a total of about 230 account customers, with over a thousand transactions. (The number is not definite as the writer was a haphazard speller and it is not clear whether a name spelt in various ways, e.g. Clerk, Clarke or Clark, refers to one or more customers, while it is also uncertain whether a 'Mr. Clark' is the same as John Clark, Bothwell.) In the later period there are far fewer entries as in this period Hopkins was preparing to return to England and so scaling down his business. Many of the entries there are concerned with William Rout, Hopkins' brother-in-law, who took over the business on the Hopkins' departure.

The day books occasionally give the title, address

or occupation of the customer, and from this it can be seen that Hopkins dealt with many highly respectable citizens, including some of the leading business people of the community. The list gives 2 lieutenants, 7 doctors, 10 captains (mostly of ships), 6 clergymen, 1 Honourable and 1 Esquire, while many customers were landowners from various parts of the island and sometimes Port Phillip. Hopkins supplied at least 8 firms including Mather's, various Government departments, the Queen's Orphan School, the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the two Independent chapels. Well-known customers included Gamaliel Butler, Bisdee, Watchorn, Lord and Lyne, while a number of occupations are given; printer, cooper, brewer, carpenter, tailor, coach builder, cabinet maker, chemist, builder, draper and tinman, and goods were sent to customers at the Bank, Customs House, Jail (sic), Wool Store, H.T. Stationery Warehouse, and to the Captains' ships. On two occasions customers were referred to as someone's friend, e.g. 'Mr. John Harrison, 78 Macquaries St, Mr. Hodgson's friend', presumably as a recommendation.

The goods provided were largely small items of ironmongery, with nails, screws and tools predominating and including such items as sheep shears, lead, scythes, glue, rope, naptha, fishing lines, wool bagging, thumbscrews, sheep bells, padlocks, scissors and a sugar chopper. Some clothes were provided: various sorts of trousers, waistcoats, shirts, jackets, gloves, buttons and a few pairs of shoes. Stationery included paper, ledgers, and hymn books. Quite a variety of non-perishable food was sold: flour, salt, tea, coffee,

sugar, rice, dried fruit, oatmeal, mustard, ginger, allspice, with tobacco and one lone bottle of porter. Ghee and butter, bacon and hams were also sold. Crockery and cutlery were in demand, and soap was a popular line. Miscellaneous items included slate pencils, marbles, starch, looking glasses, razors, a paint box, a nurcery fender (sic), and a great bargain, a diamond for £1/5/-. The smallest order was a staple for twopence, while the largest were over £100. A rare glimpse of shop life is given by one entry: "Mr. W. Bisdee Bot it himself, taken by his own Dray. 47 lbs Rope for Well 8 £1-11-4. not paid for Thompson of Jerusalem cut it off all the Lads being out.'(sic)

As well as selling goods Hopkins provided some semi-banking services. At various times he paid a subscription (to the London Missionary Society), provided a newspaper, lent small amounts of cash, apparently paid dividends on Bank shares, and, when a Mr. Robertson paid cash into the Bank at Melbourne to Mr. Hopkins' account, this money was paid to Mr. Perry in Hobart for Mr. Robertson. Some half dozen men were sent to Victoria and one customer, possibly Hopkins himself, was provided with 2 labourers and a hutkeeper.

A later reference by JB Walker to Hopkins' nearness in money matters[8] seems to be borne out by these records, for obviously every penny mattered. Even large orders were charged 7/6 for the cask in which to pack goods, while the philanthropic customers were not given discounts. On one occasion an imperfect bread tray was provided free, for some undisclosed reason Messrs J. and R.W. Murdoch were only charged Net Prices,

and one lucky person was allowed 1/- off a 5/- purchase of vinegar, but these are the only instances of any leniency. Some customers were charged 25% advance, and William Rout paid up to 35%. Holidays were rare: it was a six-day week and only on Christmas Day was the shop closed. From the reference to 'all the lads' Hopkins must have employed at least three of these; he himself was often absent so presumably employed a manager, though the ledger seems to be in his virtually indecipherable handwriting.

So the picture emerges of a busy concern providing a wide variety of goods and some services for a large number of customers. Hopkins' wool buying was clearly divorced from his retail outlet, and there is only one entry concerned with wool: '30 Bales Wool pressed at 10/6 per bale' for Gamaliel Butler. The amount taken varies dramatically from day to day, from as little as £3 to over £100: about £140 per week would be average, making a total of over £7,000 per year.

At the end of February 1839, however, Hopkins advertised that he was closing his retail concern and would treat liberally with those making large purchases. He asked that accounts be settled, and announced that he would be carrying on business in his new store.[9] William Rout took over the old store in March,[10] but Hopkins' 'new store' is unexplained. He left the colony for England at the end of the year, and what happened to the new store is not recorded.

Another view of Hopkins the merchant is seen in the Clyde Company Papers. In the late thirties the Clyde Company dealt with five Hobart firms, including

Hopkins'.[11] Hopkins acted as an agent in sales, and shipped goods to Port Phillip: indeed he was trusted to select goods and send them over, 'and I have no doubt but that he will charge high enough,' wrote Philip Russell.[12] He quotes Hopkins as charging 2/6 per pound for tobacco, evidently a high price,[13] and when Hopkins sends in an account his comment is 'which I must pay.'[14] By now Hopkins was in a position where he could be selective as to which wool he exported, for he told Philip Russell that he would not take his brother George's clip.[15] The reason for this is unknown. George Russell paid Hopkins £45 rent, for an unnamed area.[16]

Hopkins, then, is a trusted and respected merchant, looked on as shrewd and severe in business matters. In religious matters, however, he was generous; he 'has expended hundreds after hundreds in the erection of Christian churches, and in the provision of Christian pastors,' wrote Russell.[17]

Hopkins had another business interest: by the end of the decade he owned various pieces of land. These are listed in 1839:-

Farm, 10 acres and cottage, 10 miles out.

Stone house and one acre, Hestercombe, adjoining chapel.

House, shop and land in Elizabeth Street.

Splendid family residence in Patrick Street (presumably Kent House).

2 cottages and land by the Presbyterian cemetery.

Cottage and allotment in Brisbane Street.

4 allotments, Collins Street

4 cottages, 5 allotments in Frederick Street.

Land in Goulburn Street.

Allotment in Harrington Street.

10 acres in Hamilton.

1,280 acres in Cornwall.

71 acres in Huntingdon (Green Ponds).[18]

Some of these, for example the house, shop and land in Elizabeth Street, he would have used himself, but others were rented out, and this was additional income. Kent House, for example, was let as a school.[19]

Hopkins' rent book for this period is extant,[20] and though kept erratically does indicate some sources of income:-

'1839 December

Keen - 6 months Interest in £8000 at 10% for property at Hamilton	£300
Fox - 3 months interest in £1550	30.15.-
Smails (?) - 3 months rent from Green Ponds	6.-.-
? - 6 months rent from Cambell(?)	50.-.-
1 month rent for Hanwell (?) Hall	4.-.-
1840. J. Hirker (?) 3 months Interest on £600 for property at Bothwell	22.-.-
McDougall - 6 months interest Jan	553.-.-'

Various other virtually unintelligible entries make a total of £446 income in February 1840, but after this entries tail off. As can be seen Hopkins' handwriting is very difficult to decipher, and this book seems to have been used as a note book rather than a permanent record, but a substantial income from rent and interest is indicated.

It is clear that Hopkins had many business interests and he is a good example of Hartwell's description of a merchant. He writes that the early merchant had many functions: wholesaling and retailing of imported commodities, lending on mortgages, advancing on colonial produce, acting as an agent for absentee investors and English buyers of colonial produce and speculating in colonial products. He was often a petty banker, and often became a prominent landholder.[21] It is not clear whether Hopkins acted as an agent for absentee or English buyers, but he entered in to the other activities, and had connections with Sydney and later Melbourne firms as well. By now the original exorbitant profits and lack of competition of the early 1820's had given way to the growth of specialisation and many retail establishments: competition meant under-selling, so goods were often sold at less than cost price. The smallness of the market meant prices were never stationary and speculation was still rife.

On arrival, imported goods were sold at an advance on the invoice prices proportional to the demand for the goods in question: seldom less than 50% in the early days, it was still between 20 and 30% in 1839. The retailer added his margin, generally around 33%;[22] by being both wholesaler and retailer Hopkins thus made a good profit. The division of merchants into wholesalers and retailers first became apparent in the mid 1820's, but from Hopkins' day-books he was still a retailer in 1839, while he also imported goods himself. It is not clear whether he sold at wholesale prices.

It was a prosperous and promising situation, and

English relatives were encouraged to share it. Henry's brother Thomas and his wife Rebecca, née Rout (possibly Sarah's sister or cousin) arrived and set up a business in 1831, but Thomas lasted only a few years, then settled in the Huon.[23] More successful was Sarah's brother William Rout, who emigrated in 1836 with his large family and also went into business.[24]

Hopkins took an active part in various religious and philanthropic enterprises during this period: indeed, without the Hopkins family the Van Diemen's Land Missionary Society would have been considerably smaller. Its reports are extant for the years 1833 to 1837 and show that on average there were about sixty subscribers, of whom ten were Hopkins. Subscriptions were not always enough and once four committee members canvassed for money: Hopkins was assigned Liverpool Street.[25]

Each year the society sent sums ranging from £95 to £150 to mission societies in England, to help missions in such areas as Russia, India, Ireland and among the Jews. There was still criticism that money sent to England was needed in Van Diemen's Land, and the society itself was divided in its ideas for the best use of its money. In 1837 a motion was passed to the effect that a mission among the aborigines should be established, and another motion followed immediately that heathens all over the world should be remembered. This type of division led to the formation of another society, the Van Diemen's Land Home Mission and Christian Endeavour Society, which recognised members' obligation to labour in the country in which they dwelt as well as supporting missions in other lands.[26] Hopkins supported this

society with generosity and enthusiasm and once more canvassed in Liverpool Street. The society, though non-denominational, gradually became dominated by Congregationalists.

Another new society was the Infant School Society, established in 1832: the committee of 22 included Hopkins, and two schools were established in Hobart.[27] Hopkins was also on the committee of the Bible Society and the Benevolent Society (this collapsed in 1839 due to lack of funds).[28]

Sarah Hopkins was also engaged in charitable work. In 1835 a number of Hobart ladies formed the Hobart Town Maternal and Dorcas Society, to assist married women during their confinement, and, as far as funds permitted, to extend relief to the poor, especially children in want of suitable clothing to attend Infant, Sabbath or other schools. Sarah Hopkins and her sister-in-law Rebecca Hopkins were on the committee of 22 from the beginning. Like most charities in Hobart during the nineteenth century the Dorcas Society was perennially short of funds, but a great deal was done. Cases were visited and provided with a box of clothing as well as a Bible, a pound of soap and two pounds of oatmeal; if the clothing was returned clean within a month, a suit of clothing for the baby was provided. Later, grocery orders were given, and for a short time the Society ran a school, which was closed in 1840. Unfortunately Sarah Hopkins does not mention the society in her diaries, but she continued on its committee and was in charge of one of its boxes of clothing.[29]

Her own last two children were born in this decade,

Arthur in 1831 and Martha Clarke (called after Sarah's friend on the Heroine) in 1833.[30] When Arthur was baptised his mother wrote, 'O Lord, give me strength and wisdom to train it and my other children up in the way they should go; and let them not depart from it. As they grow in years my anxiety increases for their conversion, and though they are all young, some of them [Henry, the eldest, was eight] are old enough to be taught of thee.'[31] From now on the conversion of her children was her main concern, for in the Congregational church members had to make a public decision to enter the church. Sarah Hopkins' diary contains many pleas to God to convert her children, and she described her method. 'I have this day felt much liberty in speaking to my dear children on the importance of giving themselves up wholly and entirely to God; and entreated them with much earnestness to pray frequently for grace to enable them to do so; we were all melted to tears.'[32] However, her success was limited. By 1839 her petitions, 'which I often present with strong crying and tears', were tinged with impatience; 'but when I think of the value of their immortal souls, I cannot plead tamely, much less with indifference. I care little for their standing in the world, compared with their standing in the church.'[33] She could only hope that in God's own good time he would gather them in. Henry, 17, showed no sign of conversion: Sarah, 15, gave some evidence, but apparently was the only one.

Ironically Sarah Hopkins had more success with another child. In 1831 she sent to New Zealand to her friends the Clarkes, offering to care for their eldest

son George if they would send him to Hobart to be educated, schools being non-existent in New Zealand. George arrived the next year, and remained in the Hopkins' care until 1836. He was most impressed with what he saw of the Congregational church and the Hopkins' teaching and way of life. Sarah Hopkins had promised to treat him as if he were her own son, 'and most sacredly she kept her promise,' wrote George later.[34]

Sarah's work of conversion also included her servants. 'I thank God that I have been enabled to speak faithfully this day to one of my household, and to point out to her as clearly as I could, the way of salvation. She appears to have an earnest desire to know the truth. O Lord, give me wisdom to direct her, and enable me to be faithful to her soul; for thou knowest the backwardness of my ungrateful heart to speak a word for thee.'[35] Three weeks later she wrote, 'remained at home this morning to take care of my infant, that the young person who is enquiring after truth might go to hear the Rev. F. Miller preach a sermon to young people: was enabled to pray fervently for her, and was much rejoiced on her return to see that the sermon had made a deep impression on her mind.'[36]

Details of family life are rare; only illnesses are occasionally mentioned. Sarah Hopkins had frequent bouts of rheumatic fever and headaches, and her diary includes several melancholy entries such as 'Heard sermon with but little profit through suffering with rheumatism in the head.'[37]

1835 saw a more cheerful occasion when the

family moved to their new house, later known as 'Westella' in Elizabeth Street. 'We are about to remove, in a few days, to a new and spacious habitation,[38]' wrote Sarah Hopkins, and it was an apt description of the large and imposing mansion, on a hill overlooking the town - the same hill, in fact, where Hopkins and Mather had first started their business. Then it was called Potter's Hill, but as Hopkins' house now dominated it, the area came to be known as 'Hopkins' Hill'.

The architect of the new house was Henry Chapman, and the builder was his father Isaac Chapman, who had come to Van Diemen's Land with the Hopkins in the Heroine. According to a later report he was told to excel himself both in solidity and size and to rear in the sky an edifice which would put the vice-regal residence in the shade, and eclipse any private residence that had been erected in the colony up to that time.[39] The vice-regal residence had been described by Bligh as 'a poor miserable shell', by Sorell as 'uninhabitable' and by Arthur as 'unsafe',[40] and so would not have been difficult to eclipse, but the builder certainly carried out his instructions, and the True Colonist wrote that 'of all the buildings in Hobart Town Mr. Hopkins' house in Elizabeth Street will be the finest.'[41]

The three-storeyed house was made of freestone, which, according to tradition, was cut from the grounds themselves: this would account for the level site. On the ground floor was a huge diningroom capable of seating sixty, and connected to a magnificent first-

floor reception room by a spectacular staircase with curved, carved cedar banisters of rare craftsmanship. Above the staircase was a many-paned skylight, and a second staircase was for the use of servants, who slept in the south wing. There were eighteen more main rooms and two two-storey wings behind the main building: when the house was later used as a hostel, it contained forty-five bedrooms. The house is now penned in by other buildings, but in 1835 looked more imposing: the street was one to two metres wider and a metre lower, so the flight of stairs and portico in front were more impressive, while there were carriage entrances and exits on both sides of the building. The pre-eminence of the house among Hobart dwellings is shown by the fact that the Governor ordered that the death of William IV and the accession of Queen Victoria be proclaimed from its steps, in the absence of a Town Hall, and later the birth of the Prince of Wales was similarly announced.

In an article on 'Westella', H.L. Dodson comments that Hopkins was 'most hospitable and must have maintained a large establishment,'[42] while the Clyde Company Papers have a letter from a Mrs. Williams to a Mrs. Reid, to the effect that 'Mrs. Hopkins hopes when you come to Town you will stay at her house - a grand one.'[43] Even so, one may wonder why Hopkins built such a huge house for his relatively small family. He is described several times as 'unostentatious',[44] but the house and more particularly the instructions to the builder (if genuine) do not seem unostentatious, and it is easy to see in its building the determination of Hopkins, a man 'not unwilling to talk of his successes'[45] to show

the world that he had made good. Certainly his rise to riches can be seen clearly in the comparison of the two rooms and a skilling of 1823 with the mansion only twelve years later.

If Hopkins wished to impress the local inhabitants, this was one of the best ways. Dixon, writing in 1839, described Hobart society: 'Money is the grand topic of conversation, and to appear wealthy is their greatest ambition. In no part of the world are riches more honoured than in Van Diemen's Land. It is no matter how you became possessed of them, what is your history, or what your propensities.'[46] Certainly it was after the move to the new house that the first signs appear that Hopkins was accepted by the upper echelons of Hobart society: for example, he was soon made a Director of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land, a position requiring and conveying considerable prestige.[47]

He also owned a house at Hestercombe, where the family often stayed in the summer, and in the late 1830's life seemed serene. 'This year has commenced with a continuation of all my mercies,' wrote Sarah Hopkins in 1838. 'My dear husband in his usually good health, my children all living and at present in the enjoyment of full health, and I am spared another year with a tolerable share of health also.'[48]

During the last three years of the decade Henry Hopkins had another great interest: the development of the Port Phillip area. 'Port Phillip mania', as it was called, began in Van Diemen's Land in 1836. The island was considered somewhat played out as a field of labour and enterprise, and was in a depression, so many prom-

inent colonists made plans to settle in Port Phillip, or at least secure an interest there.[49]

In 1836 Thomas Roadknight, agent for the firm of Hopkins, Naylor and W. Roadknight (the first mention of this firm) arrived in Port Phillip, William Roadknight himself having sailed over in 1835. The Roadknight family had settled in Van Diemen's Land some years earlier. They now attempted to improve their position, emigrated to Port Phillip and took up land at Winchelsea.[50] In March 1837, Hopkins himself visited Port Phillip, and under a depasturing licence acquired the property beside the Roadknights'. It was called Wormbete, an aboriginal word meaning a lake with a black fellow's mound, and was virgin country, unfenced: cattle ran to Lake Otway.[51] Hopkins ran sheep at Wormbete and frequently visited the property, but installed a manager and never lived there himself. He loved Van Diemen's Land and apparently felt no urge to move to more promising country. His association with the Roadknights was close, but no details are known: however, in September 1838 the Roadknights took his eldest son Henry to Port Phillip.[52] A month later Hopkins senior went there and returned to Van Diemen's Land in December, leaving his son behind. Sixteen-year-old Henry had always had a fancy for farming and presumably was learning about it under the Roadknights' care. Hopkins senior paid another visit to Port Phillip in 1839.[53]

As well as taking up land, Hopkins imported goods to Port Phillip and was the first to export wool from the colony, while a block of land he bought for £40 sold

in 1839 for £300.[54] He had an agent in Melbourne as early as 1838, and later made extensive purchases of wool through the grocery firm of Annand and Smith.[55]

In the Log of Captain Tregurtha, 1837, Hopkins is mentioned as a passenger on the return voyage to Launceston. The weather being bad, the brig was anchored off the mud flats and eight people went ashore to the site of the first settlement at the foot of Arthur's Seat. They crossed the peninsula to the sea and returned by a circuitous route, and when they arrived back at the beach, one of the party was missing. Finally he returned, as evening was closing in, and though it was dark and squally they all started for the ship, reaching it just before a heavy squall burst. 'On reaching the cabin Mr. Hopkins gave utterance to an audible prayer thanking God for our deliverance, which was indeed most providential.'[56]

Hopkins' interest in Port Phillip was not merely economic. He was anxious that every settlement should have access to the ordinances of religion, and convinced that what Australia needed most was the spread of Christian teaching and the opportunity to practise Christian worship. In 1837 he wrote to the Colonial Missionary Society offering to pay for the outfit and passage of a minister to Victoria,[57] and the Rev. William Waterfield arrived in Hobart in 1838. He stayed with the Hopkins, then sailed to Port Phillip, where a wooden chapel was used for worship.[58] However, a permanent church was quickly planned, with generous help from Hopkins, and he went to Victoria to lay its foundation stone in September 1839. At the ceremony

Waterfield prayed and read from the Bible and Hopkins laid the stone, 'after which he delivered a most energetic and Christian address which breathed a truly Catholic spirit, and with which all present seemed deeply impressed.'[59] This church became the Collins Street Independent church, the first permanent church building in Melbourne. As well as assisting with the building of this church, Hopkins lent £300 for the erection of a house for the minister, while Sarah Hopkins wrote that 'Mr. Hopkins has an agent in Melbourne and Mr. Waterfield has an unlimited order to draw all he may require for his support until his own people can produce an income sufficient for him.'[60] This open-ended giving was not typical of Hopkins, and it must have been a disappointment to find that Waterfield did not really appreciate his generosity and was not a great success in his post.

However, Hopkins' difficulties with the various Congregational ministers were one of the few areas in which he had problems. By 1839, after seventeen years in Van Diemen's Land, he had earned a fortune and was well established in Hobart with his mansion, his businesses and his position in the respectable world of religion and philanthropy, besides his interests in Victoria. Sarah Hopkins wrote of Hobart as 'this town, where we have been the recipients of so many blessings, both temporal and spiritual. To attempt to recount them would be useless, for they are more than can be numbered.'[61]

Sarah and Henry Hopkins now decided to return to England, possibly to remain there. Sarah's father had

recently died, and they wished to see her mother and all their relations: but it was hard to leave Hobart friends and relations, and especially the new Congregational church and 'our much loved pastor' Nisbet.[62] At this time, Baptist immigrant F.S. Edgar wrote a letter to England:

'24th December, 1839

Dear Aunt Gifford,

Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins and family being about to return to Europe, Mrs. Hopkins as kindly promised to call and see (relatives of Mr. Rout) they are members of the Independent community and have been honored, I believe in doing more good in this Colony than any other two individuals. Mrs. H. you will find is what a person should be professing Godliness.

Mr. H. realised a large fortune for his family - six thousands pr annum, and has done much for the cause of Christ in these colonies.

F.S. Edgar.'[63] (sic)

Hopkins wound up many of his business enterprises. His ironmongery store was taken over by his brother-in-law William Rout, and he sold many pieces of property.[64] He retained some, including the Elizabeth Street house, Kent House, and Wormbete.

The family left Hobart on 28th December 1839, and, proceeded to England. 'During the voyage we were preserved from storms and fears of every kind; and my husband, my dear children and myself, enjoyed uninterrupted health, except those of us who suffered from sea-sickness: and were permitted to land in safety at Portsmouth, on the 19th May 1840.'[64] In London they

met relations and friends, and then were faced with the necessity of finding something to do. In June, after considerable trouble, anxiety and prayer, they decided on a house; even then it was not where they wished to live.[65] July saw them visiting Edinburgh and Ramsgate, and over the next couple of years they travelled to various places and moved house at least twice. It must have been an unsettling period, and even in January 1841 Sarah Hopkins wrote that only God knew why he had directed their steps to England.[66]

Much of their time was taken up with religious concerns. Unusually for Sarah Hopkins there is considerable criticism: 'a very good sermon badly delivered', 'rather tedious', and of one well-known preacher, 'Mr. Binney said many excellent things in his own peculiar way.'[67] Worries about the fate of the Hobart church kept obtruding, while at one stage Sarah was so busy furnishing a new house that 'I find my mind too much drawn from spiritual things, and too much engaged in worldly matters. How difficult to be diligent in business and fervent in spirit.'[68] This was a rare admission for a Hopkins.

The Hopkins were not happy in England: Sarah regretted being but an idler in the vineyard, while what her husband did without his business interests is unknown. He retained a keen interest in Van Diemen's Land and in 1841 the Hobart Town Courier published a letter 'our friend Hopkins' sent to the Mechanics' Institute.

'Kilbourn, September 10, 1840.

Gentlemen, - You will receive, by the 'James',

Capt. Tod, a small parcel of books, containing twenty-seven volumes of the Edinburgh Cabinet Library, which I beg your acceptance of, and if approved by you to be placed in your library for the instruction and entertainment of the youth of Hobart Town, for whose interest I feel deep concern. I hope your institution will flourish, and be instrumental in preserving and improving the morals of the youth. I assure you the prejudices of the people in England are strong against us; for I consider myself and family, although absent, still belonging to the colony, and shall do all in my power to remove the unjust prejudice that prevails. I believe that mony families that have gone to America would have preferred coming to our colony, but the fear of having the minds of their children contaminated has prevented them. A gentleman who is desirous of emigrating, has written to me to know the state of morals in this colony. I have informed him, and many other persons who have been making like enquiry, that our Sabbaths are much better observed than they were in many parts of England, and that we had many institutions formed for the improvement of youth and the welfare of society, which were liberally supported. I hope the colony will go on to improve, it will at all times afford me much pleasure to hear of your welfare and prosperity.-

I remain, Gentlemen, your's, &c.,

H. Hopkins.'[69]

Hopkins also encouraged others to take an interest in Van Diemen's Land, among them Major Walch, a cousin by descent from a third A'Gutta sister. Walch was at

rather a loose end, and, influenced by Hopkins, decided to emigrate to Van Diemen's Land,[70] while another acquaintance, a sea captain named Crosby, was persuaded by Hopkins to trade between London and Van Diemen's Land.[71] Henry junior was sent to a gentleman in Essex to learn farming,[72] and what the younger children did is not recorded: presumably they continued with their education. In 1840 sixteen-year-old Sarah gave her parents great joy by becoming a member of the church, and the Hopkins were busy finding a replacement minister so that Nisbet could visit England. Most ministers were reluctant to go so far, but eventually one was dispatched and Nisbet arrived in March 1842, and two months later married Sarah Hopkins junior.[73]

Henry Hopkins junior was not such a model son. He returned to Van Diemen's Land in October 1841 and, as he left, his mother gave him a letter, dated October 27th: 'Although you have caused me more heartfelt anxiety than all the rest of my children, I will not refer to the past ... You have been brought up in the fear of God - received much religious instruction at home - and taught to pray, and praise God as soon as you were able to understand their meaning - yet with all this, in addition to the prayers of your Father in the family and in secret, and the numberless tears of agony I have shed when pleading for you at the throne of Grace your heart is still hardened against God, you have no love to Him - and I fear very little <u>desire</u> to know him.

'I hope you will endeavour to restrain all impatience and bad temper and feeling towards your fellow passengers and if any dispute arise try to give

way especially if you are the younger of the two - and if disputes arise with others never interfere, or give your opinion, lest you should make an enemy for yourself but always decline, if asked to do so. - I mean if asked to give your opinion. - One of the most difficult lessons you have to learn is to maintain silence and not weary others by continual talking, this is particularly necessary in a vessel where everything that is talked of is remembered, and spoken of in the society in which passengers settle after they land ... Keep a watch upon your lips - Above all never speak of family or domestic concerns.' After more religious admonitions she concludes that she is 'Your ever affectionate and anxious Mother, S. Hopkins.'[74]

In mid-1842 the Hopkins left England for Van Diemen's Land. There are various possible explanations. That Hopkins senior was bored is probable, as is the possibility that the family found their position in England (where they would never be anything more than lower middle class) far less pleasing than their prominence in Van Diemen's Land. (Melville, writing of Tasmanian life, remarked that a visit to England was perhaps the only way to make many people rightly understand the true nature of their pretensions.[75]) Prospects for the children would have been better in Van Diemen's Land: obviously Henry junior wished to return, and Sarah Nisbet and her husband had to go back to fulfil John Nisbet's position. Sarah senior was not particularly well in England - once she had a 'dread of mental derangement caused by an uneasiness in the brain'[76] - and all in all everything must have pointed

to their return. Captain Crosby was taking his new barque, the Jane Frances, on her maiden voyage to Australia, and the Hopkins family accompanied him, arriving in Hobart in December 1842. An indication of their changed social status in Van Diemen's Land at least is that, while in 1822 the press reported the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins in the steerage, in 1842 this had become Henry Hopkins, Esq., and his Lady, in the cabin.[77]

CHAPTER 6

POLITICS AND BUSINESS IN THE 1840's

In the twenty years since the Hopkins had first arrived, Van Diemen's Land had undergone substantial social and political development, and had become much more economically viable. With wool as a staple export, and wheat, seal and whale products and other minor crops also exported, the colony supported a large free population, and the thirties had been a decade of general prosperity and progress. Depression hit the colony in 1841, made worse by the fact that transportation to New South Wales had ceased in 1840 and more convicts were sent to Van Diemen's Land, so that unemployment grew; however, a new market had opened in the settlement at Port Phillip. The steamship and telegraph were still in the future, so that Hobart was very much isolated from the world, and even from the other colonies, but patriots like the Hopkins believed that it had a prosperous future, and their aim was to make it 'eminent among the colonies'.[1]

After his return from England, Hopkins maintained his previous interests and also branched out into new areas. He was involved in establishing several new companies, while his business interests extended to Port Phillip; he became a magistrate and attempted to enter politics; while he also supported various new philanthropic institutions and the anti-transportation movement.

Despite these many activities, in 1845 the Governor, Eardley-Wilmot, wrote to Lord Stanley that, among other

Hobart men, 'Mr. Hopkins is a gentleman retired from all business residing in Hobart Town, and living on a large independent fortune. All these gentlemen are of unblemished character and unembarrassed in their circumstances.'[2] This is difficult to accept; Hopkins probably was unblemished, but the evidence is that he was not retired from business. A letter written in 1845 by Mrs. James Walch to her sister-in-law describes Hopkins' activities: 'he continues to turn the money round and round and to double it at every turn. Wool home and iron out sold for double.'[3] Wool had another decade of unstable prices: low in 1841, down to a very low figure in 1843 with many bankruptcies, then rising prices from 1844 to 1849, though these were not invariable and such a large firm as Henty and Co. of Launceston failed in this period.[4] Hopkins also suffered loss, and in 1848 William Russell wrote to George Russell that wool prices were down: 'H. Hopkins, it is said, will lose £10,000 by his speculations in wool last year; but I think this must be overshooting the mark, for it would take nearly one million of lbs., altho' he was to lose 3d a pound, to make up this sum.'[5] He goes on to say that they must just take what they could get, and hope for better prices for the next clip, doubtless Hopkins' philosophy also. It is noticeable that if Hopkins did lose £10,000 it seems to have left no other sign. The Clyde Company Papers also hint that Hopkins was still in retail business: someone writes of £27 'which I paid to Hopkins on your account,'[6] so with Mrs. Walch's statement it does seem probable that he continued from where

he had left off in 1839, and Eardley-Wilmot's comment remains unexplained.

Hopkins' erratically-kept Rent Book also has some entries showing different activities in the 1840's, notably an interest in brewing beer, though on a very small scale.[7] Given his encouragement of the Temperance Society, this could be seen as hypocritical, but possibly it was merely for home use.

At the end of the decade two new activities showed Hopkins' interest in establishing industries which might develop the colony's resources, and the esteem in which he was held in the business community. In 1848 the Australasian Smelting Company was formed in Hobart, with Hopkins as one of its seven directors. They applied for a lease to mine coal and other minerals on Schouten Island, and after a long correspondence and many difficulties, the right to obtain all coal, limestone, ironstone and clay on the island was finally given to the three trustees (one of which was Hopkins) for twenty-one years. In 1850 a General Meeting, at which Hopkins was Chairman, was told that after several attempts excellent coal had finally been found and it was expected that 250 tons a week would be produced. The Directors now wanted to look into the possibilities of copper, and the future seemed promising. Calls on the £10 shares had been £2/10/-.[8]

The second company, the Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company, was formed in 1849 to provide transport to and from Tasmania. Thomas Chapman, Henry Hopkins and John Walker were requested by the company to receive applications for shares, and Hopkins was an extensive share-

holder, though not apparently a director.[9]

He was also interested in acquiring land, and in company with other businessmen bought a considerable amount:-

123 acres in Hobart, 1844, with W. Rout and G.W. Walker
420 acres 1844, at Forbes
1 acre 26 perches in Hobart, 1844, with John Morgan
10 perches, Hobart, 1848, with W. Rout and G.W. Walker
31 perches, Hobart, 1849, with W. Rout and G.W. Walker
1 rood 22 perches, Hobart, 1849, with W. Rout and A. McNaughton
4372 acres, Beverley Parish, 1849, alone
626 acres, Salisbury, 1850, with John Walker.[10]

It is not recorded for what purpose Hopkins bought this land, but as the other buyers were as philanthropically inclined as he, some of it was probably used for this purpose.

During the 1840's quit rent, due for years, finally caught up with Hopkins, and in the Government records there are half a dozen entries such as 'Henry Hopkins 1 rood 13 perches in Hobart. Quit rent £1/6/6 commencing 1830. Quit rent due £13/18/-. Fine £3/6/3 Fee for grant £2/5/-. Cost of survey £1/-/-.'[11]

Quit rent was a perennial problem for the colonial government: if Henry Hopkins, whose son-in-law wrote of 'how scrupulous Grandpapa was in paying up everything to the day'[12] did not pay his quit rent then not many others would have done so. Quit rent was 5% per annum on the value of a land grant, and there was a good deal of public feeling against it. Governor Denison wrote that 'scarcely a single grantee had ever,

after his grant has been issued, paid the quit rent reserved in his deed.'[13] Landholders opposed every move to enforce collection, treated non-payment as a legal right, and viewed enforcement of payments as unconstitutional taxation. Ross, for example, wrote in 1834 that 'settlers have more than enough to do in bringing the land into cultivation and carrying on their farms, without paying quit rent'[14] (a category which hardly included Hopkins). Governor after Governor tried to deal with the situation and failed, and the problem was still unsettled in 1850. Hopkins was given rent remissions, for no apparent reason. It is interesting to see that he definitely sided with the mass of the colonists in opposing the Government, presumably on principle, as he could well afford to pay. The quit rent business is the only example in the whole of Hopkins' career of any suggestion that he failed to obey the law, and this was the most respectable possible of misdemeanors (he still rated as 'unblemished' with Eardley-Wilmot).

During the 1840's he held many responsible positions. He was a Director of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land, and of the Tasmanian Fire and Life Insurance Company and the Hobart Town and Launceston Marine Insurance Company, both established in the 30's and paying 50% dividends (dividends among insurance companies varied from 50% to nil).[15] Hopkins had also been made a magistrate in October 1843, and while later events showed that this move was not unaccompanied by criticism that one of Hopkins' limited education should hold such a post, for Hopkins himself it was a signal

and gratifying honour, and he took his duties as magistrate seriously. He was an assiduous attendant at the General Sessions and Quarterly Licensing Meetings, when his vote was uniformly given to restrict the number of licensed houses in the city, and the discouragement and prevention of the temptations afforded to young people of both sexes by low-class public houses and singing and dancing saloons.[16]

In 1846 Hopkins' name had risen to great prominence, when under unusual circumstances he accepted a seat on the Legislative Council. Created in 1828, this consisted of 15 appointed members, two-thirds of whom (i.e. 10) formed a quorum. When Governor Wilmot had arrived in 1843, the colony was in the grip of a depression and he had great difficulty in raising money. Some members of the Legislative Council (consisting of 6 officials, 8 settlers and the Governor) criticised his methods of raising revenue and in August 1845 defeated two money-raising bills. In October 1845 there were bitter debates over an Appropriation Bill and six settler members (The Patriotic Six) resigned: the Council then had no quorum and the passage of the bill was stopped.[17] Excitement ran high, and Wilmot had difficulty finding replacements. The letter he sent to prospective councillors stressed the unconstitutional acts of the Patriotic Six. Finally by the end of December Wilmot had his six new members, and announced their names: last on the list was Henry Hopkins Esquire. The Hobart Town Advertiser, fiercely critical of Wilmot, framed the announcement in a black mourning border.[18] In succeeding issues the six were

bitterly criticised as having no qualifications for the job, although, wrote the Advertiser, it was not surprising that they accepted, as none had any judgment or discrimination. When the highest honour in the land was offered to men who in their wildest dreams could never have anticipated it, they were so dazzled they accepted.[19]

Henry Hopkins was described as 'the dernier resort of His Excellency. Mr. Hopkins regrets excessively that he was ever persuaded to accept the last seat in the Council. No man has more reason. [He has no qualifications.] He admits this freely,... he acknowledges unreservedly that he knows nothing of the laws, or policy, or politics - that though he will certainly oppose, he is utterly unable to comprehend His Excellency's system of finance.' In answering the question why Wilmot appointed such a man to the highest and most responsible position in the colony, the Advertiser decided Wilmot was trying to degrade the position so low that the Council would be held in disrepute - with 'Henry Hopkins, Esquire, in his natural unfitness, as a tail-piece, he may indeed misrepresent the colony and hope to be believed... It was not without a struggle that Wilmot could bring himself to descend so low as the object of our present sketch. He could not help remembering that when the city magistrates were appointed for the first time he did not think him fit for even that appointment, nor was it until the use which might be made of him as a strict professor of religion occurred to the astute mind of the late Comptroller-General that his name was added to the

others in the commission. His expressions too respecting him had been contemptuous in the extreme. What, then, must have been his feelings when after a fortnight's delay from the time when the last of the magistrates had communicated his willingness to accept the honor, after soliciting one after another to fill the last vacancy and still unable to do so in spite of delay, solicitation, or misrepresentation, he was at last obliged to avail himself of the willingness of Henry Hopkins, Esq, the Last of the Magistrates, to become the Last of the Members.'[20]

Other newspapers made no comment on Hopkins, but not everyone agreed with the Advertiser. The Clyde Company Papers show R.H. Brown writing that Hopkins would replace Kerr in the Council, 'a change not to be regretted.'[21]

On March 24th the ceremony of swearing-in took place, Wilmot looking 'care-worn and harassed.'[22] The Advertiser described the event as a farce; among other ludicrous happenings Hopkins 'detained the printed book containing the oaths in his left hand, while with the other he held a magnifying glass'[22] (he should have held the book in his right hand). Wilmot then read a minute stating his intention to issue debentures to raise money.

The following day's session was taken up with other business, then on 26th March the debenture resolution was read. Henry Reed, another new member, objected to it and moved an amendment that the question be postponed for six months: Hopkins, in the one speech of his parliamentary career, 'begged leave most cordially to

second the motion.'[23] The amendment was defeated, 9 votes to 5, and the original resolution was then put and carried, Reed and Hopkins having previously retired from the chamber.[24] The next day they were not present, and resigned from the Council. Hopkins sent a letter of resignation:-

'Sir,

Having accepted from your Excellency the offer of a seat in the Legislative Council, I regret that a sense of duty compels me to resign my trust. Convinced that my services are not likely to prove available for advancing the interests of the community, I beg to respectfully solicit your Excellency's acceptance of the resignation of my seat in Council.

I remain respectfully your Excellency's obedient servant,

Henry Hopkins.'[25]

Hopkins and Reed were still criticised, even after resigning; they must have known that they were only put on the Council to be used by the Governor, and that opposition would be idle.[26] Thus ended what was later described as, in the opinion of some of his friends, the only mistake in Hopkins' life:[27] the only time he had not supported the colonists against the British Government.

The episode did not daunt him, for later in 1846 he stood for another public position. In each of the five wards of Hobart, three Commissioners were to be elected to supervise lighting, paving and cleaning the streets. Hopkins, Young and Officer stood as a group for the ward of Argyle, and advertised together: 'Gentlemen, Record your votes for T. Young, R. Officer and H. Hopkins.'

Interest in the election was great and on polling day business throughout the city was almost entirely suspended. The conduct of the people was praised by the Courier, but it noted that towards the close of the poll many exciting incidents occurred. In one or two cases, it reported, experienced electioneering tactitioners brought up a sufficient number of voters, whom they had in reserve, to turn the scale where the issue was previously doubtful. The results in Argyle were Lewis 332, Young 229, Officer 219, Hopkins 112, Harbottle 110, Mezger 57, Dickenson 22.[28]

There was an immediate call for a scrutiny, and Hopkins advertised in the Courier, demanding a scrutiny on the grounds that many individuals who voted for Lewis were not qualified to so vote (meaning that convicts had voted). His petition was signed by Young, Officer, Dickenson, and others, but the Chief Commissioner refused the demand for a scrutiny.[29]

More positive results were obtained when Hopkins supported institutions and movements designed to improve chances for men to lead a better life in the colony. A major way of doing this was seen to be by encouraging a savings bank. These had become popular in England as a way to help working men develop habits of foresight and thrift, virtues Hopkins prized. Although the establishment of the Hobart Savings Bank was largely the work of Hopkins' friend G.W. Walker, Walker later stated that the aid and co-operation of Hopkins had made the Bank what it was.[30]

Hopkins attended the first meeting held to propose a bank, in January 1845; all present were personal

friends of Walker. The next meeting elected a committee of six, including Hopkins, and he, Walker and another member waited on the Governor, and asked him to be the President. The bank opened in March, with the object of encouraging 'industry, frugality and prudence among the working classes of the community.'[31] It was very successful and in a year had 601 depositors, although one of these, Hopkins, was not living up to the ideals of the establishment. His great-granddaughter had a copy of his Depositor's Book, which showed that he put fifty guineas into the Bank when it opened, then a week later withdrew it.[32] There were no more entries in the book. A 4% interest rate might have sufficed the working classes, but it was not enough for Hopkins. However, he took an active interest in the Bank's affairs, and in 1849 was made a Trustee.[33]

Another method of encouraging the deserving poor was by assisting education, and Hopkins was always keen to do this; he was also a fervent supporter of non-sectarian education. There had been a petition to the Governor from the Presbyterian minister Dr. Lillie, T.D. Chapman and others for a school where religion would be the concern of the parents, and which would carry on the education of youths who had left elementary and private colleges; the Governor had offered land provided sufficient subscriptions were given.[34] In May 1846 Lillie and Hopkins were at a meeting which was to decide what should be done to make the suggested school a practical proposition, but nothing eventuated. However, in 1847 the land was given to the Church of England for a school, and this galvanised the nonconformists into

action. West wrote that, instead of 'wasting time in unavailing complaints, the friends of education were convened by Mr. H. Hopkins, an opulent merchant, when a prospectus was submitted by Rev. Dr. Lillee and J. West.'[35] The prospectus was for a Proprietary School, undenominational, to be similar to a university; the shares were rapidly taken up, the Governor granted a splendid site on the Domain, a building was erected and the Hobart Town High School opened in January 1850. Hopkins continued to take a great deal of interest in the school: he was on the Committee, endowed a scholarship for the children of missionaries, and gave a prize: typically this was not for academic work, but was the Hopkins Prize for Moral Conduct, with the winner elected by his schoolfellows.[36]

Besides wishing to promote education and habits of thrift, Hopkins was among those who wished to remove the stigma of the convict system, and the degenerate habits, evil example and competition to honest working men which convicts provided. In 1845 he was a signatory to a petition calling for a public meeting about the depressed state of the colony and the high taxation, and demanding legislation by representation;[37] while the next year another public meeting established a London Agency to promote the colony's interests, and a committee to organise this. Hopkins was on the committee, and paid a yearly subscription of five guineas. Members of the committee saw themselves as 'a voluntary association of private individuals, deeply interested in the moral, political and social welfare of Van Diemen's Land, with no party or personal views,

but wanting the attainment of objects generally desired by the colonists at large: principally representative legislation, the abolition of transportation and free female immigration. The London agent was to exert himself in promoting these objects.[38]

Feeling against transportation was growing, and in 1848 rumours that the British Government intended to make Van Diemen's Land the sole receptacle for convicts caused great indignation, with public meetings and petitions criticising this move. Convicts were no longer assigned to colonists, who thus lost their cheap labour. In November, with the arrival of the Ratcliffe with 248 prisoners, a deputation of thirteen, including Hopkins, interviewed the Governor with a large petition, but received an unsatisfactory reply.[39] In 1849 ten ships arrived with convicts; other colonies resisted transportation successfully and most Van Diemen's Land colonists were united in their determination to resist it too. In 1849 the Anti-Transportation League was established by John West, a Launceston Congregational minister, at a series of meetings held at Hopkins' house.[40]

In the agreement for the League his is the third signature, and others include William Rout, T.D. Chapman, G.W. Walker, and R. Officer, all eminent citizens and philanthropists, and friends. By 1852 they were successful: nothing is known of Hopkins' role in the League's activities, except that he supported it with large sums of money.[41]

During the 1840's Hopkins maintained his interest in Port Phillip, and visited it at least once a year.[42] This showed enthusiasm, for travel between the colonies

was arduous, and J.B. Walker wrote that few Tasmanians visited the mainland unless compelled by business, for 'the pleasures of a trip in the small colonial traders were not such as to be lightly encountered.'[43] Hopkins had several ventures there, however: he had invested large sums in several houses of business in Melbourne, and made extensive purchases through the grocery firm of Annand and Smith,[44] while he ran the property of Wormbete. At one stage he considered selling this: George Clarke wrote in 1843 that Mr. Hopkins had lost several thousands at Port Phillip,'[45] and Hopkins may have given up faith in the area and decided to dispose of his property. Bells and Buchanan wrote: 'I saw Hopkins yesterday. He said he had made up his mind to sell his run and stock at Port Phillip. He asks a large price - £8,000. I think he said there are 300 acres of purchased land included. Such a sum would be too much for us to venture on, but possibly he might be induced to take a good deal less.'[46] Not Hopkins: the run remained in his hands. His son John Rout Hopkins went to Victoria in 1845, aged seventeen, spent six months with the Roadknights learning the business, then managed Wormbete until 1851, when his father transferred the property to him.[47]

While Henry Hopkins was still in charge of Wormbete he wrote a letter which was published in an English book, The Cottagers' Comprehensive Guide. Among hints on religion, disease prevention and the cooking of cheap and wholesome food, the author included encouragement to emigrate, quoting Hopkins' letter. 'I know Mr. Hopkins,' he explained. 'He is a gentleman, a christian, and a man of great influence, high standing,

and much property in Australia. His word, his judgment, and his knowledge may be fully depended on.' The letter follows:

'Hobart Town, 10th July, 1847.

Rev. and dear Sir,

The accounts you have frequently given of the distressed state of many of the farming men in your district, make me wish that they could emigrate to the neighbouring colonies. I have myself engaged several married couples, with their families, upon my sheep station on Port Phillip, Australia Felix; we give them from £20 to £30 per year, with the following rations:- 17½ lbs of meat, 17½ lbs of flour, ½lb tea, 4 lbs of sugar, per week. The boys ten or twelve years of age receive rations and are paid wages, as soon as they can take the charge of a flock of sheep. Sufficient employment could be found for the engagement of from 3,000 to 4,000 families yearly, if the government could send them out.

Should you be acquainted with any families who are desirous to emigrate, and can obtain a free passage, I shall be happy to assist them in obtaining situations upon their arrival. I have taken this opportunity of communicating with you upon the subject, that you may recommend, with confidence, any who may be desirous of emigrating to the colonies. The number of children is of trifling importance, as provisions are exceedingly cheap: say, meat and flour at 2d per lb., sugar at 3d and tea at 2s. per lb.; clothing also is very moderate in price. Indeed any man of careful and industrious habits may soon earn a competence, and rear a flock of

sheep on his own account: several men of this character, who were at first engaged as shepherds, are now in possession of good flocks of their own. We want honest, sober, and industrious men, such are sure to succeed, and ultimately acquire valuable property.

Ministers are much required in the other colony, we could readily station six or eight ministers of the gospel in the neighbouring colony, and I feel convinced they would be efficiently supported, and encouraged in their work. May the Lord send more labourers into this remote portion of his vineyard! That there may be an abundant ingathering into our Redeemer's kingdom, is the earnest prayer of,

My dear Sir, yours faithfully,

HENRY HOPKINS.'[48]

Here is Hopkins' ideal plainly stated: the honest, hardworking labourer, rising by his own industrious efforts to independence. This man he was prepared to help. Weaklings, who did not have the gumption to obtain for themselves a free passage, were of no account. By this time Hopkins knew what his mission was in Australia: apart from encouraging the spread of the Gospel, he wanted to remove obstacles in the path of those who wished to make a new life for themselves and were prepared to work at it. So he discouraged temptations like drink, and the competitive cheaper labour of the convicts, and encouraged, as far as he could, religion, education in various forms and stages, the development of new industries, banks, and insurance companies, all of which could be used by the ambitious and hard-working labourer to better himself. Hopkins

had less interest in straight-forward handout charity (except for women and children, and even then he was not nearly as involved with this) for this would increase the working man's dependence, and above all he must stand on his own two feet. Hopkins himself, of course, was the supreme example.

He was also a good example of the general temper of the times, as described by Bolger:[49] that of individual self-help, the idea that individual responsibility led by way of individual satisfaction to the common good. Evangelical churchmen initiated and maintained this idea and its consequent actions in an effort to construct a decent, wholesome community. They saw their own personal salvation lying in the same direction as the improvement of their community and so were doubly blessed. Most agreed that old habits had to be broken to improve the situation and that the best way of doing this was by educating the children. Hopkins' career is an excellent illustration of this type of charitable citizen.

CHAPTER 7

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL INTERESTS IN THE 1840's

Hopkins' interests in politics and business were secondary to his main concern, the Congregational Church. From his arrival back in the colony he played a major role in its affairs, both in the Collins Street church and in the Congregational Union. He supported the Congregationalists' move to retain the system of non-sectarian Government schools, and with others visited Government schools regularly for seven years, presumably to give religious instruction.[1]

Many of his suggestions to the Congregational Union were not taken up. He proposed prayer meetings with the Presbyterians; he tried to establish a Congregational burying-ground; he offered to pay for the History of Independency in Van Diemen's Land to be printed; he presented the Berea Street schoolrooms and church to the Church as almshouses for 'decayed Congregationalists'; and he wanted to establish a Congregational theological college.[2] These were ambitious projects and none eventuated immediately: some never did. Again these ideas are evidence of Hopkins' dynamic thinking, while the fact that they were not taken up shows that he either did not wish to or was prevented by other members from dominating the church.

The only mention of convicts came in 1846, when action was taken to ask the Government for the number of Congregational convicts.[3] It seems amazing that this had not been done before in all the fourteen years that the Church had been established, and supports Lockley's

theory that the Congregational Church assumed that its attractions were mainly for the educated and comfortable:[4] in the case of Van Diemen's Land, the middle-class and comfortable, as few Congregationalists had had much education. The typical Congregationalist in Van Diemen's Land at this time came from a working-class background, and by hard work had established himself in the respectable middle-class: examples are Miller, Nisbet, Rout, Salier, Whitesides, Facy and of course Hopkins himself. Apart from Miller and Nisbet, all these men were merchants. The pattern can also be seen on the mainland, with David Jones, the Fairfaxes and a large group of Adelaide merchants. However, for the upper (Anglican) classes, the Independents were not socially acceptable. The Bishop's wife said of Mr. Swanston, 'I fear he is a sad "liberal" - so-called - having given a piece of land on one side of our property to the Independents, who have built a chapel thereon, and another portion to the Romanists - we are certainly unfortunate in our neighbours.'[5]

The chapel, which the Bishop's wife called an 'eye-sore',[6] was the Romanesque church at New Town, one of many Congregational chapels built in the 1840's, mostly with help from Hopkins. By 1847 there were fourteen churches and nine ministers in the colony, all supported with little external aid.[7] Lockley, author of The Foundation, Development and Influence of Congregationalism in Australia, considers this vitality remarkable compared with the inability of the church in New South Wales to extend, and cites Miller's abilities as the reason.[8] However, Miller's gifts do not seem

adequate for such results; what distinguished the Van Diemen's Land church was the energy, encouragement and financial assistance of Henry and Sarah Hopkins. There was a limit to this, however; when the church in New Zealand asked for aid, the Congregational Union decided it could not afford it.[9]

The Hopkins were also keen supporters of Sunday (or Sabbath) Schools. The Collins Street School was established in 1837, but early records are lost: however they are extant from 1843, when Hopkins was in charge, with his three daughters among the dozen teachers, and an average of fifty children attending each of the two Sunday services. With his strong sense of duty, Hopkins was always present, except for his absences at Port Phillip - only once in eight years was he ill. Branch schools were opened in the slum area of Wapping and in Battery Point, and Hopkins also assisted other Sunday Schools.[10] He was Chairman of the Van Diemen's Land Mission and Christian Instruction Society, and helped found the comprehensively-named Tasmanian Congregational Ministers' Widows and Orphans Fund.[11]

The Collins Street church flourished under Nisbet, and with the Hopkins' support; the only evidence of tension is that a Mr. Blackburn was suspended from membership in 1844.[12] The Hopkins enjoyed entertaining visiting missionaries, and other highlights of their social life included tea meetings, a 'Christian party', prayer meetings and several public meetings on undisclosed topics.[13]

Though both very devout, the two Hopkins had quite different religious feelings. To Sarah Hopkins religion

was a passionate relationship with God, a God to whom she could pour out her heart and who was interested in all the details of her own and her family's life. She spent a great deal of time praying and communing with God in her closet, presumably a small room set aside for the purpose, and recorded various times that she spent many hours there: 'What earthly joy can be compared with an hour's converse with God in the closet.'[14] She found a sea voyage trying, for 'I had too few opportunities of retiring, yet I frequently enjoyed communion in spirit (and silent ejaculations) with my God.'[15] Her relationship with God was ambiguous, for while she constantly berated herself as a miserable sinner, she also did not hesitate to remind God of the things she thought he should do, and give him advice; but most of her time seems to have been spent in passionate prayer, sometimes with crying and tears. This mystical relationship with God seems to have been the overpowering interest in her life, and occasionally she wrote of how she longed to retire with God, but had to perform her maternal duties.[16] Second to her personal relationship with God came interest in her children's conversion, and church matters, while she conveys the impression of not greatly caring for worldly matters. Certainly she never mentions them in her largely religious diary: none of her husband's activities, nor the arrival of her brother in Van Diemen's Land, for example, are recorded. Of course at this time women were not expected to have any interest in business or general affairs, and in devoting herself to church and family matters Sarah Hopkins was following the path most

approved by society for women.

Henry Hopkins was just as enthusiastic as his wife for the furtherance of religion, but in a much more practical way. He had a great many more interests in life, including many business and public matters divorced from religion, so did not have the time for much meditation, and he sought to advocate religion more by material help like building churches and providing ministers than by lengthy prayer (although his wife did help him with these matters, writing in her diary that she had brought out four ministers).[17] Not for him the hours in the closet: he did not have this mystical streak in his character, but was far more hearty and practical, and also a more cheerful and active personality than his wife. However, he was as fervent as she in desiring that their children be converted. He had kept the original document showing his purchase of his first investment in Tasmania, and on the back of it wrote: 'By the Goodness of God I have been preserved up to this time and the same almighty God that preserved Jacob as been with me and mine and bless us and prospered me and I do desire to acknowledge Him in all my Way, and do hope and trust that all my children will seek guidance and direction from Him and seek to promote the Glory of God and the Welfare of all around them this is the only way to be Happy and Useful in Life and to fit us for immortality: Henry Hopkins 27 April 1850.'[18] (sic) This document certainly bears out Bolger's contention that evangelical churchmen saw personal salvation and the common good as lying in the same direction,[19] and is a telling description of Hopkins' religious beliefs.

During the 1840's many new members joined the church, but at the end of the decade Nisbet was ill, a new minister took over, and the church became reduced in numbers and divided by ill-feeling.[20] In the 1840's however, this depressing period was in the future, and the Hopkins were busy encouraging new churches and new members. They were also connected with many general charities. Woods' Kalendar and Almanack of 1848 gives an idea of the range of Henry Hopkins' activities. He was on the committees (and frequently treasurer) of the Van Diemen's Land Sunday School Union; the Infant School Society; the Mechanics' Institute; the Congregational Union; and the Hobart Town General Dispensary and Humane Society, established in 1847 to give Medical Attendance, Medicine and other Aid to the Indigent Sick, aiming to uphold in the poor, habits of self-respect and self-support.[21] In 1843 Hopkins gave £1 to the fund for the Jewish synagogue, and in 1845 he attended the Annuol Meeting of the Van Diemen's Land Wesleyan Missionary Society,[22] two isolated incidents showing his interest in activities outside his immediate concerns.

In May 1843 twenty-five Hobart women formed a group called the Penal Reform Committee. Sarah Hopkins was one of the women, and in her diary she wrote 'We have lately formed a society for visiting the female prisoners in the different factories. It was organised by Dr. Browning and Major Cotton, with, I believe, a single eye to the glory of God, and the good of the souls of the prisoners. The work is, O Lord, I trust of thee, and to thee alone we look for a blessing on our spiritual efforts. The women listen with attention, and apparent

gratitude; but thou, O Lord, art the searcher of hearts, and knowest whether they are sincere. I feel totally unfit for such a work, and can only go depending on thee for every word I am to speak.'[23]

The only comment on her work comes in 1844. 'I have now visited the female prisoners for nearly twelve months past. I have endeavoured to convince them they are sinners, and need a Saviour. I have each day visited as many of the upper cells as the time would allow (and Mrs. B - has generally gone with me, and visited the lower range), and spoken to each of the women faithfully, endeavouring to discover the easy besetting sin of every individual I conversed with that I might give them suitable advice. I have been much at the throne of grace on their behalf, and have gone from my closet to the cells: yet little good appears to have been effected; their minds are still hardened. O that we could see the heart softened by a sense of sin! and a willingness to flee to Christ.'[24] No more is heard of this work; although it sounds unsuccessful and condescending, it nevertheless represented a good deal of Sarah Hopkins' time and energy, if she did indeed visit the prison every day for a year. It was an era when women were not generally expected to take much part in active charitable work, and this and the Dorcas Society seem to be the only women's groups actively working in the field: and even so, the Penal Reform Committee was organised by men.

Sarah Hopkins was still a committee member of the Dorcas Society, a collector of subscriptions for Melville Street and in charge of one of the bags of clothes. By

1844 her daughter Sarah Nisbet was also a committee member, and later her other daughters did similar work for the Society, while over the next century Sarah Hopkins' granddaughter and great-granddaughter were on the committee for many years between them.[25]

Home life for the Hopkins family was also busy in the 1840's. Shortly after their return to Hobart, Henry Hopkins took over the house at New Town in which Giblin had run his school. This had apparently closed by 1837 - at least, Giblin had another position by then - and in 1844 he was announced insolvent, and died the following year.[26] At some stage the New Town house passed into the hands of Henry Hopkins, Giblin's creditor. The house was built on a beautiful site, on a hill overlooking the Derwent and Mount Direction, and Hopkins set about enlarging it. He added eight large rooms in front, in two storeys, with a spacious hall and a wide verandah, changing the old house into a classical Georgian building, very similar to the house at Wormbete. The grounds were kept in order, and an avenue of lime trees planted up the drive. The property became known as Summerhome, for it was here that the family spent summer, returning in winter to their city house.

Henry Hopkins junior, aged twenty, married Catherine Towner, a very respectable girl and a teacher in the Collins Street Sunday School. Shortly afterwards the couple moved to the north of the island, to a property Henry Hopkins senior had given to his son. However, Henry junior caused his family much distress. His marriage was not particularly happy, and there were no children, while according to tradition once he came

into his inheritance at twenty-one, he gave himself up to yachting, horse-racing and other leisurely pursuits. He was never converted to the church.[27]

Mary Anne was a more satisfactory child. She married a surgeon, probably the son of a Congregationalist minister, joined the church and helped her parents with their good works.[28] Her mother's attitude, however, dwelt on her unconverted children, and her faith was tested greatly by God's apparent refusal to convert them. As she told Him, 'I have sown the seed of knowledge - but Thou O Lord must give the grace.'[29] John and Arthur both left, unconverted, for Victoria, where John later joined the Anglican Church. However, the Hopkins were cheered by the arrival of George Clarke in 1846. He joined the Congregational church and after living with the family for a year, left for London to study for the ministry.[30]

1847 was a year of general family distress, culminating in the death of Sarah Nisbet, aged twenty-three.[31] This shock devastated the family, and Sarah Hopkins never really recovered from it. She appears in her diary as a lonely woman, struggling to do what she believed to be right in the midst of lukewarmness, apathy and opposition. All her efforts appeared to have borne little fruit, while her husband was often absent and when in Hobart must have been constantly busy and so of little support. In 1849 she died, quite suddenly, aged fifty-six.[32]

In her funeral sermon John West praised her Christianity and her generosity: 'There are few denominations of this island who have not witnessed her

liberality: her name is enrolled with every society, formed to succour the distressed, and comfort the poor.'[33] Unfortunately this is the only evidence of such a range of activities, but those charities she is known to have supported differ from her husband's in that she was directly helping unfortunate women (convicts and the poor), not trying to provide opportunities for self-help. However, this type of help fitted the accepted female role, by being personal, simple, and on a small scale. Women paid visits to the unfortunate and provided small material comforts, while men pursued more complex and prestigious, and less personal, charities such as establishing schools and banks.

Admittedly Henry Hopkins was one man who did not shrink from personal interaction with objects of charity, and his visiting and teaching in schools, and handing out tracts are examples. Although he left very few papers of any kind and few people wrote of him, his obituaries give a good and apparently frank description of him.[34] He was an uncomplicated person, very energetic, hearty and sincere, determined in the pursuit of what he thought ought to be. He was proud of his success, but a general kindliness and affection for others, and a realisation of his own deficiencies, prevented arrogance, as did his much-mentioned simplicity. Unsophisticated but shrewd, with common sense rather than a deep intellect, it is easy to dismiss him as a simple hearty man, but he made and kept a fortune in circumstances which defeated many other men: he must therefore have had considerable financial ability, and a very active business mind, while his success in so many

simultaneous activities intimates quite outstanding qualities in these fields.

An example of his dealings with others, his desire to help and his rather forceful methods of doing so, is seen in his connection with the Walch family. In England in 1841 he had met Major James Walch, whose wife Eliza was the daughter of a third A'Gutta sister and thus a cousin of both Henry and Sarah Hopkins. Major Walch served in the British Army in India, returned to England in 1837, and was concerned as to the future of his three sons. Hopkins advised emigration to Van Diemen's Land, and the Walches arrived in 1842. Governor Franklin provided a position as Commandant of the Prisoners' Station at Broadmarsh, but after several years here Walch moved to Hobart, once more under Hopkins' advice, and became a bookseller.[35] Mrs. Walch sent her sister-in-law a copy of Hopkins' letter concerning the business: 'He has been the great mover in this business and Mr. William Rout (brother of Mrs. Hopkins) had also entered warmly into it.

"Dear Sir,

Mr. Rout and self have had several interviews with Mr. Tegg and have at last concluded to take the concern. It will be a great undertaking and will require all the energy and attention that you, Mrs. Walch and your son can give but with the blessing of God there is every prospect of your obtaining a livelihood for your family. The terms are one thousand pounds cash, one thousand pounds in 2 years and one thousand pounds in 3 years. Your son to go immediately into the business and you also to assist in taking stock. Immediate possession to

be given when the stock is taken etc."[36] Mrs. Walch further explained: 'We pay down £1000 now and Mr. Hopkins goes Security for the rest. He is well able to do so for he continues to turn the money round and round and to double it at every turn. Wool home and iron out sold for double ... Mr. Hopkins becomes a very important person in Hobart Town and has now got a seat in Council. In a colony like this preferment is open to all who have interest or merit and our good friend must always be respected.'[36]

The bookshop flourished, largely due to the business acumen of the Walch' eldest son James, while a younger son, Charles, was determined to go to sea. Henry Hopkins obliged once more, and persuaded his friend Captain Crosby to take Charles on his ship as an apprentice.[37] The Walch family became good friends of the Hopkins: they joined the Congregational church in 1847 and Major Walch later became a deacon.[38]

Despite this success, the end of the 1840's saw Henry Hopkins at possibly the most depressing period of his life, with bereavements, failure in public life, some troubles with his children, financial loss in Victoria, and considerable problems within the church. Fortunately at this stage George Clarke returned permanently to Tasmania, and this lightened the gloomy situation considerably.

CHAPTER 8

NEW ZEALAND

George Clarke's parents came, like the Hopkins, from the artisan class. His grandfather was a carpenter: his father George (usually called George Clarke senior to distinguish him from his son George Clarke junior) was apprenticed to a gunsmith.[1] He also picked up some knowledge of carpentry and engineering, but his scholastic achievements were 'very modest'.[2] When he was young, he read Cook's accounts of his travels, resolved to go to New Zealand, and, being deeply religious, offered himself to the Anglican Church Missionary Society as a catechist. He and his wife Martha, aged twenty-four and nineteen, joined the Mathers and Hopkins on the Heroine in April 1822. As a cabin passenger and a cleric Clarke had a high social status on the ship, but he and his wife became very friendly with the Hopkins.[3]

From Hobart the Heroine sailed to Sydney, where the Clarkes stayed with Samuel Marsden at Parramatta for three months.[4] Marsden was enthusiastic to convert the Maoris, who he thought had great potential for Christianity. His policy was that it was no use trying to impose Christianity on savages: first they must be civilised, and only then would it have any impact. To this end he tried to recruit catechists with practical skills, but the gunsmith's skills were not those Marsden desired to teach the Maoris, and Clarke was not sent to New Zealand until the local Maori chief would allow him to come as a missionary only. Instead Clarke

was put in charge of the Aboriginal establishment at Blacktown, and here, on 29th June 1823, George Clarke junior was born.[5]

Finally, in March 1824, the Clarkes boarded the French hydrographic vessel La Coquille, whose Captain made an amused comment about his passenger: 'in his new condition as missionary, he had taken on a tone and pretensions well above those of a simple workman'.[6] On April 3rd the ship arrived at the Bay of Islands, where a small mission had been established for some years. It had met with little success, for the Maoris were not proving easy converts. They had a reputation for ferocity and cannibalism, and were well-satisfied with their life-style, based largely on tradition and ritual: important aspects were the tabu and the gaining of mana, or prestige. New Zealand was a fertile country and the Maoris intelligent, and they had adapted well to their environment and saw no need to change.[7]

In 1814, after many setbacks, Marsden had established three missionaries on the Bay of Islands, but little progress had been made. The three men spent much of their time bickering, complaining, and trading with the Maoris in muskets. In 1819 another missionary, Butler, arrived: he was ineffective, resented by the others, and eventually took to drink. However, in 1823 a new missionary, Henry Williams, provided effective leadership and removed the old abuses.[8]

There had been no converts: the Maoris took from the whites only what they wanted (muskets, axes, blankets and cloth). They were far stronger than the Europeans, who were dependent on them and so forced to

adopt some Maori ways, observing tapus, speaking Maori (for the Maoris had no desire to learn English), eating Maori food, and submitting to Maori thefts and insults, especially from the chief, Hongi, who treated them very much as he chose.[9]

However, by the time of the Clarkes' arrival in 1824 some progress had been made, with schools, medicine, clothes and tools provided for the Maoris; some natives would make superficial European actions like shaking hands. The Clarkes settled at Keri Keri, in a house built by Butler. It still stands, and is the oldest house in New Zealand.[10] George Clarke senior rapidly acquired the Maori language and opened a school for Maori children, some of whom lived with his family. He taught reading, writing and useful crafts such as carpentry and blacksmithing.[11] His wife Martha led an extremely busy life, cooking and caring for the house and family, training Maori girls to help in the house, teaching in the schools, coping with the absence of many basic comforts and household utensils, and on top of this bearing a child almost every year - the Clarkes eventually had twelve. Supplies came, rarely, from Sydney.

For many missionaries the Maori point of view remained incomprehensible, but George Clarke senior was sympathetic to them, and took a great interest in their customs, laws and habits. Young George had a rare upbringing for a nineteenth-century white child, for he grew up in a society where the native was more powerful than the white, and it was the white who had to compromise. He wrote that several Maoris of high descent worked as servants for the family. 'In giving

our orders, they were always in the form of invitations, and if they did wrong we could go no farther than express our disgust and call them to their senses by appealing to their honour as gentlemen and ladies, or to the dictates of the universal conscience.'[12] While this suggests that lower-class Maoris were not treated so courteously, nevertheless it shows that George grew up in a society that was unusually tolerant, both in fact, and in mental acceptance by whites of the Maoris as equals. He played with Maori children (his companions including Heke, later a chief) and had Maori nurses.

To the missionaries' great joy, the first Maori was baptised in 1825. In a letter to Governor Arthur in Hobart, Henry Williams and George Clarke senior describe first an attack by about eighty natives, who were driven off by seven men, two native helpers and eight children. However, 'our intercourse generally with the natives has been interesting and encouraging,' especially with one chief who was favourably disposed to them. He underwent a dramatic deathbed conversion with four missionaries at his bedside.[13]

Hongi, the chief on whom the missionaries depended for protection, was not converted, although he was friendly with the Clarkes. On one occasion a tree fell on Hongi and he lost consciousness: the Maoris asked Clarke for help. Clarke, no doctor, decided to try the fashionable remedy of bleeding, and the horrified Maoris only agreed on the condition that if Hongi died the Clarkes' lives would be forfeit. Fortunately Hongi recovered.[14] When he finally died, the missionaries were worried for the safety of their wives and children, and

young George remembered being woken in the middle of the night, wrapped in a blanket and taken by boat to safety.[15]

His parents were affectionate; his father was a genial, warm-hearted man, deeply religious but with a horror of cant, and fond of his children. Martha Clarke was often ill and depressed, but was a loving, sometimes indulgent parent, who did not mind if small children whiled away long church services by making castles out of the hymn books.[16] George Clarke junior seems from his writing to have been very fond of them both and to have had a happy childhood. In 1830, accompanied by a missionary, Yate, he went to Sydney, and spent six months visiting Marsden, 'having a very good time of it.'[17] When Marsden visited New Zealand, he decided that a new mission station inland was needed to bring contact with more populous areas, and chose Waimate as the site; Clarke senior was to be among the founders.[18]

Clarke designed and supervised the building of a road from Keri Keri to Waimate: this was the first road in New Zealand, and included a bridge with a span of 64 feet, of which Clarke was proud.[19] Cottages were then built and the families moved in. Clarke senior began a school, which flourished, and built a chapel-cum-schoolroom, then a house for his family. This still stands, kept in its original condition by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

As well as this building, the mission was busy with religious work, for Waimate soon became the centre of Maori conversions. Things were happening to the Maoris over which they had no control: disease, war, and

the upset of traditional values due to the introduction of European goods. The white man seemed to be able to control these things, so his status increased and his example was copied.[20] For their part the missionaries did all they could to make Christianity as attractive as possible. Martha Clarke gave food and medicine to the sick, while her husband undertook bleeding and tooth-drawing, though knowing little of either. He was noted for saving a Maori boy from drowning, and for redeeming several slaves from death, while there were usually some Maoris living with the Clarke family.[21] Yate, a bachelor missionary, also lived with them.

One problem for the missionaries was the education of their children. George Clarke senior was working to improve his own scholastic achievements and was anxious to give his sons more than he had received as a boy. There were two options: children could stay at home and pick up some education as best they might from busy parents or other family members, or they could be sent away to school, for there were no schools for white children. The Clarkes' youngest daughter followed the first course, and was given lessons by her older sister Mary. 'I simply learnt what I liked and what was distasteful was left undone mostly...'[22] This would not do for the boys, and so when Sarah Hopkins offered to care for young George and see to his education, her offer was accepted. (Worse was to come, for the second Clarke boy, at the age of seven, was sent to his grand-parents in England.) In 1832 George Clarke junior left New Zealand, and after a tedious passage landed in Hobart, miserable, seasick and homesick.[23]

The Hopkins were then living in Kent House in Patrick Street, and George stayed with them for six months. In July 1833 he was sent to a boarding school, the New Town Academy, run by Robert Giblin. Giblin had arrived in the colony in 1827 and started a school, but soon moved to a post at the Boys' Orphan School. In 1831 he was criticised as unfit for this position because of undue severity to the boys, and he resigned and opened his own school at New Town, borrowing money from Henry Hopkins to build a four-roomed house for it.[24]

Little is known of the school; the only recorded opinion is that it was not very good, as Giblin was not a sensible man.[25] In his reminiscences Clarke, always tactful, barely mentions the school. Sarah Hopkins wrote that 'we have taken him [Clarke] to educate, and have placed him with those whom I trust are God's people. I am anxious that he should make progress in learning: but most anxious that he should possess that wisdom which cometh from above: that he may, should it be the will of God, make a faithful and devoted missionary to the poor heathen.'[26]

Clarke entered into many of the Hopkins family activities. In the list of subscribers to the Missionary Society he follows the six Hopkins children, giving, like them, ten shillings, and he attended Miller's Bible Class and the Presbyterian Church.[27] It seems that he was favourably impressed by the Hopkins: their general ideals, their church doctrine, and probably also the comfort of Kent House, and, later, the new mansion, compared with the bare settlements in New Zealand. Sarah Hopkins treated him as her own son, while Henry

Hopkins was fond of children, and the young Hopkins were much the same age as he was. They in turn, liked him. 'His meekness of temper and manners has endeared him to us all,' wrote Sarah Hopkins, 'but especially to me, to whom his parents are so dear.'[28]

In 1834 Clarke returned home. He travelled to Sydney, intending to return to New Zealand with Yate. However, everything here was in confusion, for reasons not made clear to the thirteen-year-old boy.[29] 'Irregularities' was the euphemism used to cover accusations that Yate had practised homosexuality with the third mate on his voyage to Australia; the two had slept together in the mate's locked cabin. Clerical circles were extremely agitated, especially when reports from New Zealand confirmed the accusations: Henry Williams wrote that he knew of fifty Maori partners enticed into homosexuality. Yate demanded to be given a chance to clear himself before a tribunal, but was persuaded to return to England in December 1836 without one,[30] and the truth or otherwise of the charges is still unclear. What George Clarke did during this chaos is not known. 'Happily,' he wrote,'I knew next to nothing of the gross charges or of their merits that had been brought against him,' but Yate's faults, 'whatever they have been, could not quench my personal love and loyalty.'[31]

In the beginning of 1837 he returned alone to Waimate. What his parents thought of the Yate affair can only be imagined: Yate had lived with the family for years, and been entrusted with their sons on several occasions.

While young George was away Henry Williams' brother William had opened a school at Waimate for missionaries' sons; this may be why the boy returned home. It was a fairly informal school, and Williams gave Latin lessons while building his house, but the boys received a disciplined drilling in Greek and Latin.[32] George Clarke was very attached to the gentle, scholarly Williams, and learnt the classics with great interest. He also began a life-long passion for reading of all kinds, 'except novels, which were not allowed by our mentors, though we managed to read them surreptitiously.'[33]

Early in 1840 William Williams moved to Turanga to found a new mission station, and persuaded his promising student to come with him for a year's reading. George was considering becoming a clergyman, and agreed.[34] He enjoyed his year at Turanga. With William's sons and nephews he read Latin and Greek and learnt some French from Mrs. Williams. Williams' nephew Henry was his great friend. Together they went duck shooting, built traps for stray dogs, and shot wood pigeons. These were held tapu by the natives, who were upset by the shooting, and George and Henry were rather ashamed. From having grown up among natives, they knew of their 'superstitions and prejudices', as George wrote, and generally took care not to offend.[35]

George accompanied Williams to various areas, and gained a thorough knowledge of different Maori tribes and their customs, and the ability to 'put myself mentally in the Maori's position, and to look at questions through his eyes, as well as through those of the white

man.'[36]

George was amazed by the Maori congregations on these trips. The natives were decorated with red ochre and shark oil, wearing any European garment in any fashion they wished, and liked to carry a book, any book, as this seemed part of the ceremony in the new church. When the leader began the first line of a hymn, 'with a sound like the bursting of thunder, they took the second line out of mouth and, as it were, carried off in a roar, like the noise of many waters, all the rest of the singing. It was terrible. They felt that now or never was the time to show their friends what good Christians they meant to be. Man, woman, and child were on the strain, holding their sides, stooping to the effort, gasping for more breath, and working till the perspiration made long brown seams, where it rolled down their red smeared faces...Poor things they meant well, and were surely hearty enough, but it was hard to reconcile it with our notions of the Apostolic prepect -"Let all things be done decently and in order."'[37] This rather condescending account was written by one who was thought fanatically pro-Maori by his opponents.

During this time a British Governor, Hobson, arrived in New Zealand, and most of the native chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitingi, whereby they ceded their sovereignty to Britain in return for guaranteed possession of their land. The missionaries urged them to sign so that their land would not be grabbed by rapacious white settlers, for having lived among the Maoris for so long, most missionaries had their interests at heart. Hobson had previously visited Waimate and been impressed

with Clarke senior's knowledge, zeal and ability, and offered him the position of Protector of the Aborigines (or Maoris). Clarke felt his acceptance would ensure fair treatment for the Maoris, so with the blessing of his fellow missionaries took up the job in April 1840.[38]

His duties were to protect the Maoris from injustice, cruelty and wrong, to establish friendly relations with them and to encourage their development, but in practice this meant preventing fraudulent land deals and attempting to uphold the terms of the Treaty of Waitingi. One of his first duties was to buy land for the Government for the site of Auckland, and he recognised the incongruity of having to buy land from the Maoris while protecting them. Hobson wrote optimistically that he considered these two offices perfectly reconcilable in Clarke's hands. More than optimism was needed, however, as Clarke had no machinery to enforce Government decisions, no courts to which to take disputes, and no laws modified to suit Maori society. He was reduced to publishing notices in the Maori Gazette prohibiting the warfare:[39] or, depending on one's point of view, he was an indolent man and this was all he could be bothered to do.[40]

By now a new element had appeared in New Zealand, to become either the heroes or the villains of the piece, according to one's outlook. In London Edward Gibbon Wakefield had established his New Zealand Company, and had charmed subscribers into buying land in and sometimes emigrating to New Zealand. His theory was that economic distress and overpopulation in England could be relieved by selling colonial land to farmers at an adequate price,

which would cover the cost of establishing settlements and bringing out labourers, thus creating an agricultural society of landed gentry and landless workers, colonies united with Britain in a happy interchange of men and markets. The Maoris were to retain one eleventh of the land and the chiefs would be turned into English-style gentry, while the inferior natives would become labourers.[41] This arrangement made no provision at all for the Maori point of view, and would have broken up the whole fabric of Maori life.

Wakefield's brother Colonel Wakefield landed at Port Nicholson (later Wellington) in 1839 to buy land, and from the start the missionaries thought poorly of the whole venture, especially the method of land purchase. 'I believe,' wrote Clarke junior five years later, 'in no single instance of the Company's purchases have they been explained fully. Had they been so, I think no purchase would have ever taken place.'[42] The Maoris were never told that their lands, villages, cultivations and burial-grounds were to be redistributed, or realised that the forest would be destroyed and that thousands of settlers would arrive. Colonel Wakefield, however, reported that he had bought twenty million acres, for £9,000 worth of European muskets, blankets and other goods.[43]

From 1840 onwards English settlers began to arrive. The Maoris were astonished, and when surveyors marched into the Port Nicholson villages to mark out the new towns, the natives denied the sale of their land, pulled up the surveyors' stakes and obliterated markings. The surveyors persisted and divided up 600 acres, including

six villages, with total disregard of the Maoris. Haswell, the Company appointed protector of the Maoris, spent much of his time pulling down Maori fences and seizing the potatoes on a cultivation allotted to him by the Company. 'I am quite tired, sick, annoyed and disgusted with Haswell,' wrote George Clarke senior, the Government Protector of the Aborigines. 'I have written to him officially, privately, and spoken to him also. He never answered my letter.'[44]

Edward Jerningham Wakefield, Gibbon Wakefield's nephew, founded another settlement, giving some Maoris £100 worth of goods for the land. He set up a feudal hall, with himself as chief, and a good deal of drinking, naked dancing and cohabiting with native women. 'I found the chief had sent a Wayhanee [native woman] to sleep with me,' recorded a visitor, 'and I was good humoured and took compassion on the lady.... She could say all the Church prayers by heart, play a good game of draughts and swim like a fish.'[45] With the coming of the surveyors and their stakes, the Maoris protested that their land had not been sold, and strongly resisted white advance. Similar events occurred at Nelson and New Plymouth.

The British Government was well-intentioned and would have preferred to treat the Maoris fairly: besides, the Company settlers were making their own laws and New Zealand was in a state of anarchy, so Hobson was worried. He enlarged the Protectorate Department, and among the new members was eighteen-year-old George Clarke junior, recently returned to Waimate from Turanga, and appointed in January 1842 as a clerk.

In fact Clarke wanted to enter the church, but had had such a good, and rare, training in Maori customs, language and the logic needed to unravel Maori affairs, that he felt he could not resist the call to public service at a crisis, when these qualifications were needed in the interests of both races.[46]

Not everyone felt he had the right qualifications. In 1845 Edward Jerningham Wakefield published a book describing recent events in New Zealand; as would be expected, he disliked missionaries, particularly Henry Williams and George Clarke senior ('it soon became very clear that Mr. Clarke (senior) had considered it the main part of his duty to collect every complaint that he could hear of on the part of the natives against the white people')[47] and was disgusted when young Clarke was given the appointment. Firstly, 'the very name of Clarke was disagreeable to the settlers at Wellington; and it was at once thought that but little good could come of the son of such a man.' Secondly, Clarke junior was nothing but 'a gaunt lad of eighteen, who had evidently got his tail-coat on for the first time,' and, worse, had 'been born and bred at the missionary head-station near the Bay of Islands, almost among the darker natives... His descent from a catechist gunsmith and too famous interpreter was of bad omen; his tender years and very imperfect education seemed to imply the certainty of his incapacity.

'Those who were parties to his appointment will probably state in defence of it, that he was thoroughly acquainted with the native languages and customs. Granting this, I would ask whether it be more fit that a

Protector of the Aborigines should be well acquainted with the habits of the ruder race, or with those of the more civilized and artificial society with whom it was wished to amalgamate them by soft degrees? Whether an educated gentleman was more likely to acquire the knowledge of the Maori habits and language, or an uneducated and but half-civilized son of a gunsmith to attain the acquaintance with the habits and restrictions, the refinements and perfections, of civilized life, both so necessary to a due performance of the office in question?... his only qualifications made him rather capable of teaching civilized men how to become savages, than of gently guiding savages to the difficult goal of civilization.' According to Wakefield, Clarke junior immediately employed himself in 'prowling about among the pas (native villages), especially those of the discontented natives; he neither sought nor obtained the acquaintance of any of the leading colonists; and resembled, in the little of his manners that was open to observation, a sulky Maori boy, rather than even a White Government officer.'[48] With such widely differing views on the position and future of the Maoris, the Wakefields and Clarkes were bound to clash.

Fortunately for young George, not everyone shared Wakefield's opinion of his capabilities. 'Whether I deserved it or not,' he wrote, 'I soon got the credit of being a clear and careful interpreter, and for so young a fellow I was thought to have unusual discretion in all dealings with the Maoris.'[49] This reputation led to Clarke being appointed interpreter at the Maketu trial in 1842. Maketu's family showed signs of madness: as an

example Clarke told of how Maketu's father had burst in on Martha Clarke with a loaded pistol, determined to shoot her. 'With the pistol at full cock and pointed across the table to her breast, my brave little mother did not flinch (I don't think she ever screamed in her life), but with a few low and quiet words she said, 'Ruhe, put down that ugly thing. I am only a woman, God is looking at you, and you must put it away.' Twice he presented the weapon, and dropped it at her calm and steadfast look, and then he withdrew.' Ever after he revered her.[50]

Maketu himself had murdered a white woman and her two children, and the Maoris, sure of his guilt, gave him to the British for justice. As the first such trial, it was a critical occasion for the Government, who had to make the principles and working of the British judicial system clear to the Maoris. George Clarke junior, as interpreter, explained the principle that the law assumed an innocent until proved guilty, the functions of judge, jury and lawyers, and the meaning of the terms and oaths. The trial proceeded and Maketu was found guilty.

The chiefs were impressed by the fair trial and the workings of British justice, and this helped reconcile them to British rule. Clarke gained great kudos for his part in the trial,[51] and Governor Hobson promised to further his career. Soon afterwards the British Government sent a commission to New Zealand to disentangle the land situation and discover exactly which land had been sold to Europeans. Clarke was selected first as the Commissioner's interpreter, then as Maori

advocate at his court. This was high office for a boy not yet twenty, and there was considerable ill-feeling about it among the Company's settlers, again both on account of Clarke's youth and that he was his father's son: although Clarke senior had nothing to do with the appointment, according to his son.[52] Edward Jerningham Wakefield, predictably, deplored that both positions, interpreter and advocate, were to be held by 'an uneducated lad, who had shown by his undeviating conduct during a month, that he imagined the protection of the aborigines to consist in impugning the statements and suspecting the intentions of the White men.'[53]

The situation was difficult. On one side were the Company, who claimed to have bought the land, and its settlers, who had purchased the land in good faith and now expected to be able to develop it in peace. They queried the natives' rights in any case: as W.P. Reeves wrote in the 1890's, 'At the bottom of the mischief was the attempt of the missionaries and officials at home to act as though a handful of savages - not then more, I believe, than sixty-five thousand in all, and rapidly dwindling in numbers - could be allowed to keep a fertile and healthy Archipelago larger than Great Britain. The haste, the secrecy, the sharp practice, of the New Zealand Company were forced on the Wakefields by the mulish obstinacy of careless or irrational people. Their land-purchasing might have taken place legally, leisurely, and under proper Government supervision, had missionaries been business-like, had Downing-Street officials known what colonising meant, and had Lord Glenelg [the Colonial Secretary] been fitted to be

anything much more important than an irreproachable churchwarden.'[54]

Against the sharp practice admitted by even this writer was the Colonial Government and its Protectorate Department, determined to secure justice for the Maoris. They were all most unpopular with the settlers, who maligned them endlessly, especially the Clarkes. George Clarke senior had a very low opinion of the settlers, and took the view that all Maoris were or would probably become the innocent victims of unscrupulous and rapacious Europeans. While this belief seems justifiable to a large extent, Clarke senior became very extreme, and being also rather arrogant and prone to making sweeping generalisations about Maori-Pakeha (white) relations, became hated by the settlers. An example of his generalisations is his advice to a subordinate, 'Always bear in mind that it is characteristic for Europeans to tyrannise and assume a superiority especially where there is a difference of the shade in the skin.'[55] He may have been correct about the great majority of the settlers, but this attitude made his department less effective, as it hopelessly prejudiced most settlers against it. However Clarke senior had an unrivalled knowledge of Maori affairs, made sound and penetrating assessments of the state and feelings of the Maoris, and was fully aware of the difficulties caused by the ineffectuality of the local government and of his own department in particular. He exerted great influence over Governor Hobson and his successor Fitzroy, and was not invariably pro-Maori: on a number of occasions he advised checking them, and dictating rather than entreating peace.[56]

George Clarke junior wrote frequently to his father, and his letters give a good picture of his own work.[57]

Under Commissioner Spain, his duties were to find out the facts of any purchase, prove them in court, and see that the Maoris were not cheated of land they had never sold: also to effect a compromise where disputed ground had been occupied by settlers. Maori land law being extremely complex, it often required a good deal of work to find out who the real owners of the land were. In explaining Maori law Clarke used Ancient Briton land law as an exact analogy, another mark of his tolerance, for it was rare to imply that Britons and Maoris were equal.[58] In his work Clarke was greatly helped by his knowledge of Maori custom and mentality; this meant 'I could estimate our perils better than many of my elders, and could guard against them more carefully than would have been possible without this experience.' Many quarrels came from white ignorance of Maori custom, and Clarke's knowledge meant he could smooth some of these over and nip others in the bud.[59] (When Charles Darwin had visited New Zealand in 1835, he had commented that the missionaries' children understood the language better than their parents, and could get things done more readily by the natives.)[60] Edward Jerningham Wakefield, however, considered Clarke junior's efforts as interfering, and making matters worse (worse for the Whites, that is - Wakefield always gave Whites a capital letter), although, possibly unwittingly, his book included a copy of a letter which shows that Clarke's aim was to preserve peace and prevent the occurrence of anything

that might lead to a collision between the two races. He also describes a Maori settlement so hostile to Whites that even Clarke junior 'was on one occasion threatened and driven away for attempting to interfere,' while another letter from a man for whom the worst adjective Wakefield could employ was 'nonchalant' describes Clarke's great zeal and good feeling for those for whom he was employed, and the sound judgment by which he regulated his conduct.[61]

The new Commissioner, Spain, was a solid, steady man, thoroughly honest and utterly immovable to threats. His first case was to judge the claim to the ownership of Wellington, so he and Clarke junior went there. 'We were not very welcome to the community of Wellington,'[62] wrote Clarke with his usual understatement, and Spain's court met with opposition, especially in allowing Maori witnesses. Clarke assembled a large number of these, and their evidence was taken. Then he proceeded to question Colonel Wakefield's witness, the white interpreter through whom Wakefield had negotiated the land deals. Clarke junior exposed him as ignorant, speaking little Maori, and the whole transaction as being of a 'very hasty and hugger-mugger character.' This exposure led to the collapse of the Company's claim to Wellington.[63] E.J. Wakefield was appalled; the Company's witness, a whaler, merely had 'a broad, honest way of uttering,' and 'possessed twice the qualifications to be Protector of Aborigines than the almost equally uneducated and infinitely worse-bred lad could boast, who took upon himself to laugh at him for faults of accent and grammar.'[64] 'Wakefield looks very bitterly

at me,' wrote Clarke. 'I think he looks upon me as almost the sole cause of the ruin of the company.'[65] The settlers certainly did - 'it was rather hard to bear,'[66] was Clarke's comment many years later, and for the nineteen-year-old life must have been very difficult. Colonel Wakefield was kind and friendly in private, however opposed to Clarke's views, but Edward Jerningham Wakefield descended to writing personal abuse of Clarke in the local paper, asserting that he knew nothing of Maori, was always prowling round the pas, concocting false evidence, and was perjuring himself as Interpreter. Clarke insisted in and obtained a retraction of this, and the attack became puerile and personal - Clarke was 'a raw-boned boy,' 'a nigger youth' 'an uneducated stripling,' 'half-civilised' and the 'son of a gun-smith,' which, wrote Clarke, 'if true, was surely of the smallest account, but I suppose it sounded like 'son of a gun.' Such words, he said later, only stiffened his resolution, and the insults were like water off a duck's back, though unpleasant enough at the time. He became reserved and wary, and hated living on perpetual guard and distrust.[67] Modern opinion tends to vindicate Clarke; he was, writes one authority 'in fact one of the ablest advocates the Maoris ever had, and is not to be recognised in the disagreeable youth invented by the propagandist's selective cunning.'[68] Clarke himself said of Wakefield's book that 'its sarcasm was so unrelieved, and its animus so apparent, that it did no-one much harm. Some of his facts are hard to recognise... I was very specially his <u>bête noir</u> and he never missed a chance of giving me a cut as he passed me

in his narration. Now and then he drew finely on his imagination, as when he told that I was on one occasion 'pale and frightened' because I would not head an unruly mob who wanted to force on a row in the pah. However, I am not afraid that any of you would take young Edward's picture for a portrait.'[69]

Spain was now in a difficult position, for while it was clear that the Company had no right to the land at Wellington, the town was four years old and the eviction of its 4,000 European settlers would cause immense difficulties. Colonel Wakefield refused to pay the Maoris a reasonable compensation, as Clarke suggested, and fought a delaying action, spinning new webs of falsehood and innuendo as fast as the court unravelled the past. Spain, Hobson, Clarke ('an under-current sort of man')[70] and others were criticised, and the settlers led to believe that the Maoris were outrageous and savage cannibals because they stood up for their rights. Clarke reported that a feeling of the most rancorous enmity had already sprung up between the two races, and that it took his utmost energies to keep the Europeans in check, and the natives from adopting violent measures in self-defence. Conditions in Wellington were inflammable, with some whites bent on forcing a conflict between the races, on the premise that white superiority would then be evident. Clarke had to stop many rows, and went about the town 'feeling that I was a sort of portable fire engine, ready at any moment for the cry of fire, and for a rush to put it out before it made any way.' On one occasion a fight between Maori and white ended in a pa being surrounded

by soldiers with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets. Clarke rushed into the pa, and found that the noisiest of the Maoris capering about, musket in hand, calling on the rest to fight, was his own servant. Clarke at once knocked him down, grabbed his musket and kicked him into the nearest house, while the soldiers fortunately held their fire and the scuffle blew over. Later some of the soldiers told Clarke that, thinking he had caused the row, they had meant to shoot him first. In court it was proved that the white had caused the whole incident, and the European settlers were disgusted.[71] Then Clarke's successful prosecution of two settlers, to establish the principle that Europeans were not to molest Maoris in their cultivation, led to a row in court. After the result was known of either this or another similar case - Wakefield's book is so biassed that it is hard to establish which case is in question - those present were so annoyed that many 'loudly vented their feelings against Mr. Clarke junior as he quitted the office.'[72]

Spain was anxious to press on, but Colonel Wakefield avoided him, and Spain wrote home that Wakefield had done everything he could to retard proceedings. 'I do not know what [Colonel Wakefield] will do now - when all his deceit and subtlety are exposed to the gaze of the public,' wrote Clarke.[73] He anticipated a serious clash between settlers and Maoris, and was soon proved correct. Maoris in the Wairau area of the South Island claimed they had not sold their land and burnt two surveyors' sheds on it. An armed, private expedition of Europeans at once went to arrest the chiefs for arson; the chiefs offered to pay damages but refused to

leave their land. A shot rang out, apparently from the Europeans, and firing began on both sides. Nine Europeans fell (including a third Wakefield brother) and the rest surrendered. The Maori chief, wild with fury because his wife had been killed, cleft the skulls of the prisoners with great ferocity.[74]

When the news reached Wellington, Clarke at once accompanied some magistrates to the spot 'to use my influence to settle the matter.'[75] After describing the incident Clarke wrote to his father, 'You must excuse the incoherence of my expressions for I am really so excited I do not know what to think. I cannot keep my mind fixed upon a single subject without reverting to the circumstances of this fatal conflict and the probable consequences.'[75] Fortunately trusted Europeans, including Clarke, were able to restrain the Maoris in their intention to march on Wellington, while armed posses of settlers were ordered to disband by soldiers rushed from Auckland. 'But the time is not far distant,' declared Colonel Wakefield, 'when the rising generation of Anglo Saxons will neither want the nerve or the skill to hold their ground against the savage, and take ample and just vengeance for the opposition we are now encountering.'[76] The Wakefields stirred up racial hatred in their attempt to take the Maori land, and vented their spleen on anyone, especially Clarke, who stood up for the natives. 'I have been made a mark for all the shafts that ridicule and malice can invent,' he reported, 'hooted every day and insulted publicly in the streets... The people will not listen to what I say and talk of nothing else but the extermination of the poor Maoris.'[77] Great was

E.J. Wakefield's disgust when Clarke was about this time promoted, over the heads of the Company's Protectors of Aborigines.[78]

Marjoribanks, who published a book about his experiences in New Zealand at this time, considered that the Protectors of the Aborigines were 'exposed rather to unmerited obloquy' when they were only carrying out their duty. He quotes a petition sent to the Queen by the inhabitants of Port Nicholson, who thought that settlers should be protected against natives instead, and that the Protectors were persons totally unfit for the offices they filled, and, instead of having contributed to the mutual harmony of the two races, they exercised an influence over the natives which led to the hostile state of feeling and the Wairau massacre.'[79] In other words, without the Protectors the Europeans could have taken the Maoris' land and dealt with any who resisted, and they were furious with the Protectors for standing up for the natives' rights to their own land and pointing out to them their rights. They were also furious that Clarke senior was now drawing a salary of £400 a year, while as a Sub-Protector Clarke junior was paid £125.[80]

Late in 1843 a new Governor arrived to take over this explosive situation. FitzRoy, a high-minded and honourable man, was determined to impose justice on New Zealand. He at once summoned the natives concerned in the Wairau affair to a hearing, where George Clarke junior was interpreter. FitzRoy judged that the Europeans had been in the wrong, although the slaughter of the prisoners was to be regretted, and guaranteed the

Maoris in full possession of their pas, cultivations and burial grounds. Besides being anxious for justice he had to act carefully, as he had only 134 soldiers to defend the whole country and knew that concerted action by the tribes could defeat all the whites. However, to the European hotheads FitzRoy's action appeared craven and imbecilic, and he was soon as hated as Hobson had been.[81] Predictably, E.J. Wakefield loathed him, and very bitter is his account of a levée where FitzRoy first announced that he approved most completely of all Clarke junior had done as Protector, and would support him to the utmost in the very arduous duties which he had to fulfil: then reprimanded E.J. Wakefield publicly, saying he strongly disapproved and regretted everything he had written and done regarding the missionaries and natives in New Zealand.[82]

Commissioner Spain now went to Taranaki, to judge the Company's claims to land there, and to everyone's surprise awarded 60,000 acres to the Company. Various Maoris broke into an uproar, and were restrained only by Clarke, who advised the chiefs to write a fair and calm account of their grievances to the Government.[83] Their argument was that they had been enslaved in tribal wars, and were now free, so their land should belong to them again. It was a complex situation, and Clarke prophesied that 'one false step now must plunge us sooner or later into ruin - perhaps bloodshed. The natives will never give up tamely what they consider their rights.'[84] He was right, for the matter led to war in 1860, but in 1844 it was avoided. 'Mainly at my urgent remonstrance,'[85] he wrote, FitzRoy set Spain's

decision aside.

Clarke was then sent to Otago, to assist in the purchase of a large block of land. He had a tough fight with Colonel Wakefield to leave reserves for the Maoris and put these into the deeds, and to Wakefield's disgust insisted on seeing the boundary for himself and pointing it out to the Maoris. This meant a fortnight's tramp through the snow for Clarke, Wakefield and the Maoris, and Clarke at least enjoyed it. The opinion of the more elderly Wakefield is not recorded. The deed was finally drawn up, and was one of the few never to be disputed.[86]

As affairs in the south seemed to have quietened down, Clarke now felt he could ask FitzRoy for some leave, after two years of incessant care and responsibility, which, he wrote, had made an old man of him before he was twenty-one.[87] He returned to Auckland early in 1845, but not for the tranquillity he desired, for relations between native and white were not much better here than in the south.

In the Bay of Islands area the natives had real grievances; new taxes, and a loss of trade and prestige since the capital had been moved to Auckland. The chiefs felt their power lessening: Chief Hone Heke, for example, was indignant when he heard Queen Victoria prayed for in the Waimate church, when previously the chiefs had had this blessing. In July 1844 Heke and his followers, aroused by American and French traders, cut down the flagstaff at Kororareka. With Maoris giving trouble in five areas FitzRoy was forced to compromise, and gave a most conciliatory talk to the natives at Waimate; to

good effect, for those to whom he spoke stayed loyal. However, when he returned to Auckland he found that Heke had cut down the flagstaff again, for adverse news had come through of a report of the British Parliament on Maori land tenure, and this worked great mischief.[88]

At this stage George Clarke junior arrived in Auckland, and after only a week of his longed-for rest, was asked by FitzRoy to go to the Bay of Islands and find out how the chiefs would ally themselves if conflict broke out. Clarke did this,[89] and then in March 1845 the crisis came. Not only did Heke cut down the flagstaff again, but he burnt the town and the inhabitants fled, including the Maori Protector. There was now no Government agent in the area, and Clarke volunteered to go. He knew Heke, and thought his boyhood friend would not harm him.[90]

Clarke's instructions were to block Heke's threatened advance on Auckland by keeping him busy in the north, to strengthen the shaky alliance of the Government's Maori supporters, and to be the communication link between them and Auckland. When he landed, among the first Maoris he saw was Heke. 'He was rather surprised to see me... He knew how hard I had fought, almost single-handed, to get justice for the Maoris, and so he was prepossessed in my favour.' He said he trusted Clarke, so long as he was unarmed, and let him continue on his way. Clarke contacted the pro-Government Maoris and encouraged them to commit themselves to the British side:[91] from then on he lived at Waimate, presumably with his family.

When Heke passed nearby Clarke junior went to visit him: Heke, he said, was not at all uncivil. Later, Clarke was watching some of Heke's men perform a war-dance, when a party of wild Maoris from the interior came up and levelled their muskets at him. He stood still: fortunately one of the Maoris, who had been a servant of the Clarkes, rushed forward and beat the guns aside.[92]

Clarke continued to observe events, as skirmish followed skirmish between Heke and his Maori opponents, with neither side achieving much. All Clarke could do was to persuade both sides to stop putting rum-soaked rags on their wounds. Finally, in May 1845, British troops came to assist their Maori allies. Against the Maoris' advice they attacked Heke's pa, and were defeated. A month later a new commander repeated the manoevre, and was trounced. Clarke's part in the affair was to rescue his wounded brother Henry.[93]

Active operations were now suspended: Heke moved inland, and the Government forces remained on the coast. Clarke junior returned to Auckland, after eight unnerving months in the very focus of the rebellion, as he wrote. Heke had not advanced on Auckland and the allies had remained loyal, so he had succeeded in his mission. He always praised Heke's chivalrous behaviour to his opponents: Heke never took their convoys of food or ammunition or cut off detached parties, and treated prisoners well.[94]

FitzRoy's recall was now announced. Immediately there were joyful illuminations at Wellington, and at Nelson effigies of FitzRoy and the two Clarkes were

paraded about the town and then ceremoniously burnt.[95]

The new Governor, Grey, began work in November 1845, and at once attached Clarke junior to his personal staff. Grey was anxious to end the war and did so quickly, assisted by the facts that Heke was wounded and tired of the war, while more British troops and money were being provided. Clarke accompanied Grey on his expedition against Heke: his pa was finally captured on a Sunday morning, when the defenders were surprised at their prayers. Clarke then accompanied Grey to the south, where various land disputes were cleared up by compensating the Maori owners. However, by now Clarke had had enough. 'A fit of prostration had brought me very low, and I knew that neither body nor mind could bear the strain much longer. It was a sort of living martyrdom to one not over robust in health and constitution, and to be always in the storm was not at all suited to my temper. I longed for a quieter scheme of living, and it did not trouble me to give up the splendid prospects which the Governor held before me, if I could only fulfil what had been all through my peaceful ambition - to be a plain and simple preacher of Christ's Holy Gospel.'[96] Other influences were also at work. Clarke did not agree with some of Grey's dealings with the Maoris: Grey was a devious man, and Clarke thought he was not as straightforward as he should have been.[97] As in his book Clarke is normally very careful to say either good of someone or nothing at all, this statement ranks as extreme criticism. Clarke was unwilling to be in a position where he had to support a policy which he felt was morally wrong. So he resigned,

much against the Governor's wishes: in fact Grey would not accept his resignation, and gave Clarke six months' leave of absence, at the end of which he could resign if he still persisted. He did, and his brother Henry succeeded to his post, eventually becoming a judge.[97]

Most histories of New Zealand barely mention the Clarkes, and attention is focussed on the Governors and the Wakefields: this is particularly true of older histories which tend to be pro-Wakefield. Although an account of Clarke's activities does not show the whole picture, it is clear that he and the handful of men who did similar work played a vital part in events of the time. Had it not been for the Protectorate department and various missionaries, like Hadfield, who worked with it, the Government would have had no access to anyone experienced in Maori affairs and would have had little idea of how to treat the natives, beyond coercion. The activities of the Protectors, particularly the few able ones like Clarke junior, did a great deal to ensure that the 1840's remained relatively peaceful, without a general conflagration; the Protectors' attitude was similar to, and strengthened by, the strong Evangelical influence on the Colonial Office at that time. The Protectors' activities were also an example of recognition of native rights and tolerance of native customs, rare in the nineteenth century, and indeed in the subsequent fifty years of New Zealand history. However, the friendly co-existence of whites and Maoris for much of the twentieth century may have its basis in this early recognition of Maori rights, with Clarke junior one of the ablest exponents of them.

It seems clear that Clarke was physically and mentally exhausted by his seven years' work in New Zealand. Not only had his duties been constant and all-consuming, but he had had to cope with insults and a life of continual pressure, while being burnt in effigy must have been upsetting for the twenty-year-old. Many years later he wrote that the jibes of the Wakefields did him more good than harm,[98] but it is hard to imagine that he took this philosophical view at the time.

Clarke's New Zealand experiences affected his life in various ways. Primarily there was a longing for peace and quiet, and the dislike of a sensitive personality for constant criticism and unmerited slander.[99] It must have seemed to Clarke that Tasmania, where he had spent four happy years in the bosom of a loved family, was the haven of peace which he so desired. Once he was established here he showed no desire to leave it, and presumably decided in New Zealand that contentment does not necessarily come with high office. The desire to escape from New Zealand probably also influenced his decision to enter the Church. If he remained in New Zealand it would mean continuing on in the position he disliked, for he had no other training. It was highly unlikely that a man of his personality would have joined the Army or Navy, and he had no experience of the land: the church was the sole avenue for a young man of only moderate means and no influential relations. This is not implying that his claims to be called to the church were false, but these reasons probably strengthened his resolve.

It was during these years that he must have

decided to leave the Church of England and become a Congregationalist, and his attraction to the latter probably stemmed from the Hobart years and the Hopkins' teaching. To a man of Clarke's nature the simple, straightforward doctrine of the independent Congregationalists must have held great appeal, while he disliked much of what he saw in the Church of England: the ritual, hierarchy, worldliness, and above all the way in which the church was involved with the administration and therefore tied to government actions of which Clarke disapproved.

He resigned from the Protectorate Department midway through 1846, and arrived in Hobart in early November, so must have left New Zealand almost straight away. His letters show that he had kept in touch with the Hopkins: on one occasion he mentioned receiving letters from Mrs. and Miss Hopkins[100] while he later said that the opportunity to become a minister was 'in the end made for me, and I did not make it for myself.'[101] This probably means an offer of support by Henry Hopkins, both of moral backing, financial aid, and a position when trained, for in leaving New Zealand Clarke broke with his career, his church, his homeland, and in distance at any rate, with his family.

CHAPTER 9

THE 1850's

In November 1846 George Clarke arrived once more in Hobart, and to the great joy of the Hopkins joined the Congregational Church in February 1847, and announced his intention of becoming a Congregational minister. During 1847 he read with several local ministers, taught in the Sunday School, and preached occasionally, then on Hopkins' advice (and presumably some promise of support) left for London in January 1848.[1]

He entered Highbury College, a Congregational theological institution, and studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew and theology. He later admitted that it was a difficult period. 'It was not easy at first to break with such a past,.. and... to subdue oneself to the yoke of a simple college student, but I did it and have never regretted it.'[2] He was impressed by several well-known preachers, such as Binney and Spurgeon, and later enjoyed telling a story about Binney. A critic panned some hymns written by a Mr. Lynch, and an author and supporter of Lynch wrote a pamphlet defending him in strong language. Binney gently remarked that the pamphlet should be entitled '"Go to the Devil" by the author of "Come to Jesus."' It was never published.[3] Clarke admired this self-effacing and unobtrusive method of persuading others, and Binney's influence can be seen in his later work. Spurgeon, very self-confident, had less effect.

In June 1851 Clarke was ordained,[4] and began to

prepare for his return to Hobart: he had received no other call, probably because he was committed to returning to Tasmania, as the colony was now called. This was a relief to the Hobart church, for their secretary had written to London that it was hard to get men to come to Tasmania, and even harder to find money to bring them out.[5] However, the image of the Australian colonies was soon to change: Clarke arrived in Hobart at the end of 1851, and as the ship sailed up Storm Bay she was met at the Iron Pot lighthouse by a small boat containing various Hobart notables, including Henry Hopkins, who brought the first news of the discovery of gold on the mainland.[6]

Hobart's importance was thus lessened, while the Collins Street church was not flourishing. Nisbet had been ill since 1849 and had given up preaching. Substitute ministers were, said Clarke later, 'not as efficient or acceptable as could be desired.'[7] By 1851 church numbers were greatly reduced: of 31 members, 10 had died, 5 had left the church, 5 had left the colony, and only 11 remained. These were largely the Hopkins family (now consisting of Henry and his daughters Mary Anne and Martha, who had joined the church in 1850) and friends.[8]

Clarke arrived in December 1851, and in this month Nisbet resigned. Clarke was requested to take charge of the pulpit for a few months, then early in 1852 was unanimously invited to become the permanent minister. He accepted on two conditions: that the support of the minister should rest upon the congregation as a whole, not on one or two individuals, and that, as soon as the

way was clear, a new chapel would be built, to be held in trust on behalf of the whole church. Hopkins was probably behind these provisos, in an attempt to stop the church being so reliant on him. The conditions were agreed to, and Clarke's ministry began.[9]

Although the church was so reduced, Clarke was a successful minister from the first. One great asset was his character and training. 'Fresh from college, with a well-stored mind and a youthful ardour which carried all before it, he soon became a power in the community; and more than this, young himself he attracted the young, with the result that the old church became crowded out,'[10] wrote Charles Walch. The other asset was the backing of the Hopkins prestige and money, which became even more assured when he married Hopkins' daughter Martha in January 1853.[11]

Clarke's immediate success in his ministry is shown by a Social Tea Meeting, held by the Collins Street church in September 1853, only eighteen months after he became the minister. He was presented with a purse of 150 sovereigns, and in six addresses was highly praised.[12] In the same year the church adopted a set of Regulations. These stated that a church should consist of pious people with faith in Christ. They were expected to behave 'as Christians professing Godliness.' Note the suggestive 'should' and 'expected', showing Clarke's gentle way of influencing his congregation. If a member knew of a private offence of another member or candidate, he should expostulate with him privately, or acquaint the minister and deacons: only a public offence could be brought up directly before the whole church, and

then only after due notice to the pastor. To prevent the interruption of harmony and peace, nothing of an accusatory nature likely to lead to a collision of feeling and opinion was to be brought before the church except by the minister and deacons, and if this happened the matter was not to be made public. Even matters likely to lead to a conflict of opinion were to be given a month's notice. These regulations were to lead to a civilised and harmonious church with few of the arguments which had marred many Congregational churches: while Clarke was minister no-one was expelled.[13]

In 1854 Clarke gave a sermon, 'The Comparative Importance of Faith and Polity' which was the first of many sermons he had published. In it he repudiated the idea that it is of no account what a man believes as long as he believes it with all his heart. Polity (the principles of church government) are plain to see in the Scriptures: the church to be composed of the brotherhood of saints, the clergy with few powers, as in the New Testament, and individual churches independent of each other and of the secular power. Here not only does Clarke repudiate the evangelical tendency in earlier Congregationalism, but also his Anglican upbringing.[14]

His congregation was growing so rapidly that in 1853 plans were started for the new church which Clarke had stipulated. Henry Hopkins offered to donate an equal amount to that collected by the congregation in the year beginning August 1853, and land was bought in Davey Street, then the centre of a large residential area. In a ceremony reported in such an esteemed journal

as the Illustrated London News, Henry Hopkins laid the foundation stone in 1856, and promised to give £1,500 if the committee raised £800 within the year.[15] This offer, and his earlier one, were typical of Hopkins, who was trying to strike a balance between his desire to give to the church and to encourage independence in others: note that he had to alter the balance considerably. The rest of the congregation was not wealthy, and the temptation to presume that Hopkins would foot the bill either immediately or eventually must have been strong.

The Davey Street church was opened a year later, and the minutes show the minister's enthusiasm for extra activities: prayer meetings, Wednesday services, tract distribution. He was a reasonable minister: when a candidate for church membership could not get a formal transfer from his last church he was accepted anyway, while when a Mr. Fisher's lengthy absence from church was queried, Clarke said that though according to the strict letter of the regulations Fisher was no longer a member, for special reasons he would continue on the roll. At a social tea meeting in 1858, Hopkins offered to give a sum equal to that gathered in three months to provide school rooms. Clarke invited the ladies of the congregation to meet him and 'try what could be done to further the end': this is the ladies' only mention. Clarke was no financial genius - a meeting discussing ways of increasing finance could only come up with the suggestion that collecting boxes in the church be placed in a more prominent position - and when in October 1859 the school rooms were built Hopkins again had to chip in

with an offer of paying one third of the debt if the congregation raised two thirds. Generally, however, church meetings had little to discuss, and on one occasion 'the meeting was occupied with prayer and praise there being no business except the reading and confirmation of the previous minutes.'[16]

Needless to say Hopkins, as Senior Deacon, played a major part in church affairs. He visited prospective members, a busy job as numbers increased; even busier was his task as Superintendent of the Sunday School, from which post he eventually resigned in 1859.[17]

Clarke and Hopkins played a large part in the Congregational Union, of which Hopkins was Treasurer. In 1853 he advised that imported books be sold at an advance of 25% on invoice charges: £2 profit was made, in a transaction where Hopkins the business man would seem to have triumphed over Hopkins the churchman.[18] Clarke was made a member of the Union in 1854, surprisingly late, and tended to recommend moderation. He advised caution with visiting ministers whose character and position may be unknown, referring fascinatingly and mysteriously to 'recent occurrences in adjacent colonies.'[19] He thought it better to have one Australian theological college rather than smaller separate ones in individual colonies, but here he was not heeded. Hopkins and others had wanted to establish a college for twenty years, and they were still enthusiastic about the idea.

The great interest in the fifties was in inter-colonial conferences, in an attempt to overcome regional separatism. The first was held in Melbourne in 1855,

the second in Sydney in 1857. Clarke was pressed to attend the latter, but gave fear of hot weather as an excuse;[20] Hopkins did go, and presided over a meeting on Colonial Missions. A third conference was held in Hobart in 1858, and a fourth in Adelaide in 1859. Clarke agoin avoided going to this conference, and Hopkins reported that though the meetings were friendly, little business was transacted.[21] Many others shared his views on the ineffectiveness of the conferences, and no more were held until the 1880's.

Always a colonial patriot, Hopkins was more interested in Tasmanian churches, and was generous to those of other denominations. An often-told story is that when the foundation stone of All Saints' Anglican church was laid in 1858, the audience went forward to place their contributions on the stone.[22] First to place his was Henry Hopkins. What is not usually added is that his contribution was a sovereign,[23] somewhat less than the £500 he was reputed to give to the foundation of a Congregational church. However, considering the low opinion the Anglicans held of Congregationalists, Hopkins' sovereign is understandable. He was more generous to Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist churches.[24] In 1853, for example, the Baptists held a meeting to plan paying off their chapel, £100 debt. After various fundraising suggestions had been made, Hopkins spoke. He said those present should pay the debt at once, and put £10 on the table. Others followed his example, and £110 was raised.[25] Hopkins was also interested in providing religious service for immigrants to Tasmania, and gave £5,000 to this end.[26]

Clarke's great interest in the 1850's was in the question of State Aid. One of the basic tenets of Congregationalism was that the church should be entirely separate from the State, accepting no aid whatever, and Clarke adhered to this doctrine with all the enthusiasm of the recently-converted. In speaking on the topic, he said that the Voluntary principle (i.e. no State aid) was very dear to his heart. 'He had not inherited it by birth but entertained it as a matter of conviction. He had not been educated a Voluntary. All his early tastes, feelings, prejudices, and associations were arrayed on the opposite side, it was the Christian principle. Christianity was criticised for resulting in war, but if Christians had repudiated physical coercion and retained the Voluntary principle this charge could not have been brought. Many mechanics rejected Christianity because they identified it with the political establishment, and when they saw the corruption, and wrong and outrage which have been perpetuated under its protection, they said 'If this is Christianity, - away with the nuisance from the earth.' He did not wish to see the rising colonies preparing the same thraldom for themselves, and thought it his duty as an Australian to advocate the voluntary principle on every occasion.'[27]

Several points here anticipate some of the main points in Clarke's character: his willingness to see another point of view, his negative opinion of the Church of England, his dislike of coercion, and his using the term 'Australian' about himself as early as 1853. This was one area where his outlook differed from Hopkins', who was an ardent Tasmanian. Clarke preferred a more

federal view, and did not let sentiment override his reasoning that the colonies would be more successful if they worked together.

In a letter to his father in 1855, Clarke mentions the Church-State relationship, and continues, 'I suppose I may consider myself as the steadiest advocate on our side, though I do my work as quietly as possible, every now and then striking a blow, but few know the hand from which it comes. In any case of emergency our people are [illegible] to look to us, and I expect will come to do so habitually - Some time ago an infamous bill was introduced proposing to endow every phase of possible religious persuasion in the community. I with another man got up a public meeting, and the task of analysing the proposed [illegible] fell into my hands. I exposed step by step the absurdity of the whole measure and the government burked the whole business. Others of course assisted but without overweening vanity I think I may take credit to myself for having dealt the hardest blow. Since that time the popular feeling has been steadily growing on our side, and even the Bishop himself has upon several public occasions declared his belief that the present system is doomed.'[28] It did not die easily. The government at last yielded and presented a bill to abolish State Aid on the understanding that compensation should not exceed £100,000. To the intense disgust of the anti-State Aid party this amount was increased, but State Aid was abolished, so the battle was won.

In 1858 there was great excitement among non-conformist circles when the well-known Congregationalist

preacher Thomas Binney (admired by Clarke in England) arrived in Hobart for a visit. Clarke admired Binney's moderate views, and followed him away from the hellfire and brimstone of earlier Congregationalists. Like Clarke and Hopkins, Binney came from fairly humble origins. Never a great scholar, he was a practical and compelling speaker and advocated less autonomy and more co-operation between Congregational churches.[29]

Clarke described Binney as 'the greatest living preacher we have, and he had done more to form and impress the mind of the middle classes in England than any minister of the day. His congregation [in London] consists almost exclusively of medical students, lawyers, and professional men, and men in positions of trust and commercial power: - on the whole the largest amount of thought, feeling, activity and influence to be found in any single congregation throughout the British Empire. He is a giant and has done a giant's work, but cannot now do what he used to accomplish. Well - he has made the proposition to me publicly and privately - and will not take no for an answer - that I should go home and be his Timothy - that is Copastor of the Weigh House with the view of ultimately taking it off his hands! It is no use my protesting against the absurdity and peril of such an arrangement - he has written home to his people and will do all in his power to bring it about. - but it is impossible, now that I am settled with a people of my own. Still there are times when I wish I could fall in with it. A more splendid career of influence and usefulness was never offered a young man, and Martha and I both feel that we are forgoing an incalculable privilege

in the introduction we might have to the highest literary and other society in the world. - It is not ourselves that we think about so much as our children. But it cannot be. Apart from all other considerations I should not like to take Martha out of her Father's reach. He is an old man - and though he would not complain I think it would break his heart to take Martha and the children away.'[30]

Clarke was also pressed several times to become pastor of the prestigious Pitt Street church in Sydney, and as well to return to New Zealand,[31] but he turned down all these offers, to the amazement of those to whom Tasmania seemed an unimportant backwater. To Clarke it was a haven of peace and tranquillity, and he was staying there.

Besides their religious activities Hopkins and Clarke were also involved in various charities, usually the same ones. In 1852 a meeting was held to establish a City Mission, to reach the semi-heathen part of the population - a large group in a colony not yet free of large numbers of convicts and exconvicts.[32] Ministers from all denominations were present, and a report in the Anglican Tasmanian Church Chronicle described 'a Mr. Clarke, a quiet gentlemanly speaker, with a good deal of earnestness of manner, who laid great stress upon the superior claims of the proposed work, as being a home mission. We might well labour for the conversion of the heathen abroad; but we should fear to do so, till we had first done our utmost for our fellow citizens. I should say that Mr. Clarke was the best advocate of the cause during the evening.'[33] The meeting established a City

Mission, with Hopkins on the committee: Clarke was soon added to it. Hopkins became a collector, remaining so until 1862, when he was 76: Clarke took less part in the Mission's affairs.

The following year saw a Jubilee Meeting of the Hobart branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Hopkins stressed the need for more bibles: if everyone had one, 'what a world, a happy world this would be. He was reading the other evening of a man who staid up all night to read his Bible, the first complete copy he had got... He hoped all would read and study more and more that blessed book.' This view, that the world would be happy if only everyone had a bible, was typical of Hopkins' simple and unsophisticated outlook. Clarke seconded a resolution to improve colportage (travelling bible salesmen) and aid China, giving a short talk on the history of the Chinese missions.[34]

He also addressed the Mechanics' Institute in 1853. His first subject, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin, the Sources of its Power', gave Hobartians the rare chance to hear a talk on a stirring contemporary topic, the book having been published only the year before.[35] His second talk, 'The use of mental cultivation to young men of the colonies', was miserably attended due to wet weather, but when repeated in fine weather it drew a good crowd.[36] Clarke began by calling his title a misnomer, for mental culture was just as important for young women. 'I am an Australian,' he continued, and 'to make our country rise to an honourable position among the nations' mental culture is vital. Greatness lies in the kind of men and women a country produces.' Australians were tempted to

undervalue mental culture, and see it as a refinement, but it was vital for all classes to develop their minds.[37]

Further evidence of Clarke's interest in encouraging youth is shown by his part in the Hobart Town Young Men's Association for Mutual Improvement, founded in 1854. He was Vice-President in 1859, and at a Breakfast held this year, he and Hopkins expressed hearty concurrence with the plans of the Association. Lectures, discussions and business meetings were held, essays written and read aloud, reviews ond periodicals were circulated and a library formed.[38] As there was little other opportunity in Hobart for these activities, it was welcome to many young men, and it also provided Clarke with a group who were to be his friends and adherents for many years: alternatively they were already among his circle from his church activities. Such names as Whitesides, Facy, and Salier crop up again and again from now on. When Binney came he addressed the young men, pointing out that toil not talent was the condition of achieving success, a typical nineteenth-century non-conformist topic. In 1859 Clarke opened the year's session with a talk entitled 'Hints on the Acquisition and Enforcement of Truth': note the suggestiveness of Clarke's title, typical of him. He also founded the Macquarie Debating Society in 1855.[39]

In 1854 a project was started which both Clarke and Hopkins supported enthusiastically. The City Missionaries were appalled by the neglect of children of the poor and suggested that schools be established. This had already been attempted twice, unsuccessfully, but in 1854

T.D. Chapman, Salier, Hopkins and several others founded a Ragged School in Watchorn Street, 'a low neighbourhood', and in 1855 another in Lower Collins Street, an area of 'poverty, squalor and vice' known as Wapping. Hopkins was closely involved with the Ragged Schools from the beginning, and approved greatly of their aims. These were to train children for trades, or at any rate teach them the three R's, and to attend to their religious and moral improvement, and also their physical comfort: they were given lunch and if necessary shoes and clothing, while some were found situations. Hopkins was Vice-President, Clarke and Charles Walch were on the committee, while the Ladies' Committee included Mesdames Clarke, Rout, Morison and Salier. By 1856 the two schools taught 380 children, and the Ragged School Association's report stated that effects were good: the children's appearance was improved, they were given hope, and they influenced their parents for the better.[40]

In 1858 the foundation stone of a new building for the Wapping School was laid by Hopkins, in front of a numerous assemblage of persons including many of one respectable non-conformist merchant group. The children, decently clothed and looking clean and tidy, were marched to the site, prayer was offered, and Hopkins 'whose workmanlike tact showed him to be an adept at his business' laid the stone. He then gave a speech, which was reported at length. It is a good example of his opinions and his style as a speaker.

'My friends, this stone is laid of a building to be devoted to the instruction of the rising generation who are destitute, whose parents have left their children

to the public, and in the desire that the children should be trained up in the fear of God, to be useful members of society. It is to be lamented that there are children left to wander about in idleness in their early days, instead of being brought up to be industrious members of society, rather than injurious members of society. I see a number of young faces around me, who have been long under instruction, who have learnt their lessons in scripture and their beautiful hymns. Mr. Hopkins spoke of the cause of education in the colony for the last thirty years, and the efforts made in bygone days by visiting from house to house to induce persons to attend the preaching of the gospel. One case in particular was worthy of notice, that of a person who had had a family of twelve children, nine of whom, sons living, had been trained in the fear of God, and had become useful members of society; had it not been for the instructions they had received in their early days, they would not have been what they were now. He would venture to look forward thirty years, and he hoped in that time every child would be taught the fear of God; and he doubted not that near where this foundation was, they would have a church, and that many would be found attending divine service. Mr. Hopkins addressing the working men present telling them that if they wished to be happy they must come to the house of God, for there was no peace or happiness without the fear of God. He (Mr. Hopkins) was seventy one years old, and he had found that 'The ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' God had blessed him and he acknowledged his gifts and he assured

them all if they wished to be truly happy, they must live in the fear of God, and they would have happiness in this world, and happiness in the world to come. They must all die; but they could not expect to die happily unless they repented of sin and turned to God; and they must not look at a deathbed for repentance; there were only two places to which they could go, heaven or hell; and he wanted them all to love God, while they had health and strength. That was the only way to be truly happy - to live in the fear of God; but it was to be lamented that so few attended the House of God. Mr. Hopkins, in conclusion, addressed the children, telling them the same truth that real happiness consisted only in the fear of God. He wished the blessing of God to attend them all (cheers).' By now an old man, Hopkins was clearly becoming repetitive, but there is no doubting his sentiments.

The children then sang 'God Save the Queen', in which some of the adults joined. Milk, buns and fruit were given to the children, who sang some songs, and were again addressed by Hopkins: the gist of his speech can well be imagined. In the evening a public tea meeting was held, and was addressed by at least seven speakers, including Clarke on 'The Necessity for Ragged Schools.'[41]

Several other charities only involved Hopkins, who was more interested in purely practical relief than Clarke. When many Huon families were left homeless after bushfires in 1854, Hopkins, Alexander McNaughtan (another philanthropic merchant), T.D. Chapman and eleven others formed a committee to help. 'Sympathizing members of

"the great human family" desirous of gratifying their benevolent feelings, are solicited to forward their "help" immediately to the committee,' who would then examine cases and render such aid as may be found admissable, ran their advertisement.[42] Hopkins and others like him were strongly opposed to straight hand-outs of money, and it took a disaster to make them contemplate giving it away; and even then only to really deserving cases.

The Benevolent Society was established in 1859 with the object of relieving the poor and afflicted, discountenancing mendacity and encouraging industry among the indigent; it is not surprising to find Hopkins among its supporters.[43] When the Tasmanian Temperance Alliance was trying to establish a Free Reading Room and Library, Hopkins gave £50:[44] though not a temperance follower himself, he thought it a good thing for the working classes. An unusual activity on Hopkins' part was that in 1859 he recommended a master and matron for the Campbell Town Hospital:[45] why he did this, and what he knew about hospitals, are mysteries, but it certainly shows that he had a wide range of interests and activities, with nothing too small for his notice.

Meanwhile his daughters were carrying on their mother's work in the Dorcas Society; both Mary Anne and Martha were on the committee and collecting money in the fifties.[46] Hopkins also continued with the other charitable and public activities begun in earlier years: he was still busy with the affairs of the High School, the Savings Bank, and his magisterial duties, was a Director of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land and of the

two insurance companies, and a leading member of the Chamber of Commerce.

He was involved with various companies in the fifties, again concerned not only with profits but with profiting Tasmania. He was a large shareholder in the Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company, and a committee member of the Hobart Town and Sydney Steam Navigation Company (1854), both aiming to promote fast, regular communication with the mainland.[47] Hopkins was also a director of the Hobart Gas Company, formed in 1854 to provide 'a cheap and convenient light for Hobart and general use for shops and houses among all classes.'[48] The Smelting Company was doing well mining coal on Schouten Island, and Hopkins was a member of a large committee which aimed to get Tasmania represented at the Universal Exhibition of Industry in Paris in 1855.[49]

Hopkins' own business still kept him busy. His day books survive for 1852[50] and show that he was actively involved in a wide variety of enterprises. Through his London agent he imported goods, largely hardware, and seems to have been ordering goods for customers: thus a typical entry reads '"Columbus", Walch and Son, various goods £309/14/7. 25% £77/8/8. Packages £6/12/0. Total £393/15/3. Drawback £15/4/2. Settled by Bill 6 Month £378/11/1. 7 July 1852. H.H.' There is no mention of a shop, but clearly Hopkins imported a large number of goods. In a list of the value of goods imported on various ships, the 1852 totals were

Imported to Van Diemen's Land £12,374/8/5 (on 25 ships)
Imported to Port Phillip £35,653/5/- (on 19 ships)

Imported to Van Diemens Land £13,392/-/-
Imported to Port Phillip £34,500/-/-
So by now he had more business in Victoria than in Tasmania, though he still bought more wool in the latter colony. Entries are often unintelligible and/or illegible, but he seems to have bought over £13,000 worth of wool in the season November 1852 to May 1853 from over 70 customers in Tasmania, and over £10,000 worth from Victoria. He was still therefore a large business man, with no intention of retiring.

Other interests were minor and much the same as in the earlier day books, with semi-banking activities. Hopkins lent money, from £5 to Mr. Peart, £100 to John West, up to large amounts. One note reads 'give (?) letter to (?) stating I had agreed to advance him six thousand pounds he to give his acceptance for the same with interest at 12½% per annum.' Accounts range from huge to very small (for example £10 from the City Mission for tracts). Hopkins also bought and sold several houses and collected rent. His main customers were the Routs, Captain Crosby, the Walches, with occasional names cropping up which were also in the 1839 books, like Dr. Officer.

Business was not only brisk but expanding. 'Agreed to import for Mssrs Smith and Adamson grocery goods at 15% they paying all expenses,' reads one of several entries. Part of the expansion came from the establishment of the two Hopkins sons, John and Arthur, on Victorian properties. John was flourishing at Wormbete, which his father made over to him in 1851. Hopkins senior then took over the 22,000 acre Mount Hesse estate,

near Wormbete: it passed to John in 1854 and to Arthur in 1855.[51] Both sons did well in Victoria. John Hopkins was a Member of Parliament, a prominent layman in the Anglican Church, and a keen sportsman and patron of many sporting clubs, as well as running his large property with success and establishing his eleven children. Wormbete was a prosperous station, and was still in the hands of Hopkins descendants in the 1970's. Arthur Hopkins followed a similar career: the Hopkins had joined the squattocracy.[52] In their early days, however, they had to work hard to establish themselves, for their father did not believe in molly-coddling them. Both sons paid 8% interest on large loans of £10,000, lent by Hopkins senior to buy the properties and stock. Even small amounts are not gifts: 'cash lent JRH per cheque, £20.'[53]

Hopkins could, however, be generous, and one example of this is seen in his connection with J. D'Emden, a Congregational minister who came to Tasmania in 1852. After a few years he left the church and became editor of the Colonial Times. In 1857 he became bankrupt and his case was heard in court. Here it transpired that he had borrowed money from Hopkins and others (including G.W. Walker and W. Rout); when D'Emden had got into difficulties Hopkins had lent him more money, even though he was aware of these difficulties 'and thought it was a bad concern, the same as most of the papers were,' he said in court, to laughter. He doubted at the time whether D'Emden would be able to extricate himself, and gave the money never expecting to see it again. 'It was his own money and if he lost it,

it made but little difference.' The judge chided Hopkins and said it would have been more useful if, instead of encouraging D'Emden, Hopkins had told him it was a bad concern and advised him not to continue: Hopkins' generosity had cost many thousands of pounds.[54] D'Emden was imprisoned for nine months, released, became a lawyer and died in 1875.

This case adds a new dimension to Hopkins' character: it is the only time on record when he said that money made little difference, and was prepared to lose it in order to advance a cause he favoured (in this case, one of the media being controlled by a person with whose views he sympathised).

Hopkins encouraged others as well. William Crosby, a sea captain, had been trading between London and Hobart on Hopkins' advice. He decided to retire from the sea, and Hopkins advised him to settle in Hobart, promising support for any business venture. Presumably with this backing, in 1852 Crosby opened a store, and this grew into a shipping firm with general merchandise as a sideline.[55] The Crosbys, Clarkes, Hopkins and Walches became a closely-knit group, who belonged to the same church, worked for the same charities, had similar business interests and as time went by intermarried considerably. The diaries of Catherine Walch (later Crosby) show a good deal of daily visiting and general socialising between the families.[56]

The Walch bookshop was flourishing, and James Walch had been joined in the firm by his brother Charles. Charles had been a sailor with Crosby, but after his father's death in 1851 became his brother's London

agent. In 1858 he returned to Tasmania, and eventually took over the Wellington Bridge shop, while James Walch ran the Macquarie Street business. Walch's became a prominent Hobart firm, especially well-known for their large scale map of Tasmania (1859), the monthly Literary Intelligencer, begun the same year, and the yearly Almanack, begun in 1863.[57]

With his social and family life, and many and various business, religious and charitable interests, Hopkins would seem to have led a full life. He was always noted for his energy, however, and in the 1850's attempted a political career, while George Clarke also made a brief entry into public life.

CHAPTER 10

POLITICS IN THE 1850's

In May 1853 Governor Denison stood on the steps of Henry Hopkins' house and announced the cessation of transportation.[1] This victory called for celebration, and Hopkins was chairman of a committee to organise a Jubilee, in honour of both this event and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the colony.[2] He proposed marking the events by endowing scholarships to secondary schools, and headed a subscription list with £105, others having given £100.

The Jubilee occurred on 10th August, 1853, with bells ringing, flags flying, and special church services at five churches, including the Collins Street chapel. All Hobart's Sunday School children then processed to the wharf, where they were provided, in relays, with morning tea and an address by Hopkins. He told them that the colonists were proving to Her Majesty the gratitude with which her subjects accepted the assurance given by her ministers of the total cessation of transportation.[3]

With this event came independence, and the establishment of the Tasmanian parliamentary system. In 1850 the Legislative Council had been made two thirds elective, but from 1856 the colony, now officially renamed Tasmania, was to have a bicameral system. There was a high property qualification for voting for the upper house, still known as the Legislative Council. In the earlier elections Hopkins had supported Thomas Daniel Chapman, a wool merchant, who had arrived in Hobart in 1841 and been associated with Hopkins in many charities

and business activities.[4] He made his name as president of the Hobart branch of the Anti-Transportation League, and led the battle for self-rule. Elected in 1851, treasurer from 1856-1857, and premier 1861-1863, he was one of the ablest politicians in the colony's history. His views were not always on the popular side as he tended to be conservative, but his honest wish to do the best for Tasmania was, according to the Dictionary of Biography, never doubted.[4] It is not surprising that Hopkins, with Walker, Mather, Salier and Walch, supported him.

Hopkins' views were similar to those of John West, whose History of Tasmania was published in 1852, and written at Hopkins' request, possibly with his financial support. It was certainly dedicated to him. West had an optimistic view of the colony's future. 'The tendency of colonial life is to annul the prejudices of European society, and to yield to every man the position which may be due to his talents and virtues.'[5] People were no longer distinguished by social class but by moral orientation: the two groups were the good hard-working productive people, and others. Government power should be used to remove the barriers that stood in the way of improvement, so that an orderly middle-class society could establish itself. This was exactly Hopkins' view, and generally that of the large group of philanthropic merchants who supported Chapman.

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were six candidates for the three seats. The election was held on 6th October, and Hopkins' candidature was announced on 29th September.[6] His electioneering consisted solely of the customary type of advertisement: a request by a long list of electors for the candidate to stand, 'we the undersigned having every confidence in your character for integrity and zeal.'[7] Hopkins' 268 signatures show that much of his support, predictably, came from the non-conformist merchant group (Rout, Salier, Whitesides, McNaughton, Mather), but included Jews, lawyers, Chapman, and the mayor, Elliston. After the list came a letter from Hopkins.

'Gentlemen. - I beg to thank you for this expression of your confidence in asking me to become a candidate for Election to the Legislative Council. Where I to consult my own feelings I I (sic) should hesitate to occupy the position you would assign me, but I do not feel justified in opposing personal considerations to the wishes of so many of my friends, and therefore consent to your requisition.

'You will not require specific pledges as to the course I should pursue in the event of being elected. I trust I should carry into the Council those principles on which I have always endeavoured to act during a residence of more than thirty years in the colony. Whatever measures may commend themselves to my judgment, as calculated to promote the liberty, security, and prosperity of the community and develop the energies and resources of the country would ever command my cordial sympathy and support.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

HENRY HOPKINS.'[7]

This advertisement was repeated for several days in the three papers: Hopkins had no election meetings.

The papers had conflicting views on Hopkins as a candidate. The Courier praised his character, and financial and mercantile experience,[8] while the Colonial Times, under his creditor D'Emden, praised him greatly:- 'Mr. Hopkins is, perhaps, at present, the most popular candidate in the field. At all events he is one against whom the least amount of prejudice exists. And very deservedly so. For a long series of years - indeed during the whole of his more than thirty years residence in the colony - Mr. Hopkins has always been among the foremost in every movement for its welfare. He has established a reputation for earnest practical philanthropy, for sound judgment, and consistent policy, which is inferior to that of no other man in the island. Others may have had greater advantages, or more brilliant natural talents than he has, but it would be difficult to find any individual more thoroughly possessed of the confidence of all who know him, and the number of such persons must be large. Mr. Hopkins may be regarded as the creator of our wool trade... In this way, and some others too that we could name, Mr. Hopkins has been among the most useful men the colony ever had. Identified with many of its interests, even at the present day, the disciple of a liberal school of politics, tempered by a wise conservatism, we have no hesitation

in saying that, if elected, he will prove one of our most useful representatives.'[9] The Mercury, however, thought Hopkins had no great merit, and 'would have done very well had not more eligible men have been found.'[10]

The excitement in the election came on Nomination Day, 2nd October, when the proposer and seconder of each candidate addressed the electors, and the candidate himself made a speech. Proceedings were reported at length, apparently almost verbatim, in contemporary newspapers.[11] Hopkins' proposer, Nutt, was received with 'great uproar.' He proposed Hopkins - 'You might have brought a better man!' was interjected. Nutt praised Hopkins' colonial experience. 'Hear Hear!' and groans. A voice, 'Pull off your hat, Hopkins.' Mr. Hopkins complied. Nutt said Hopkins 'has given ample proof of his capacity to represent your interests by the manner in which he has acquired extensive property, and the way he had managed it. (Uproar.)' He praised Hopkins' work in religion and Sabbath Schools, his solid judgment and command of temper '(A voice - aye, and of temperance too.)' with sufficient independence and decision of character to support that which he deems to be right. 'You must not forget that, although Mr. Hopkins has led a quiet unobtrusive life, he has been instrumental in promoting some of the most important public works in the colony... (Never mind the two houses, will he give us our beer on a Sunday?)'

George Washington Walker seconded the nomination, though saying it was unusual for him to take part in such proceedings. He had known his friend Hopkins for fifteen years; he was 'not a man of tinsel, he is a man of

sterling worth; not a man of words but of action.' He 'has a large stake in the colony; (how has he got it?) he has earned it by an honourable course. There are few men in this country, if any, whose mode of acquiring property would bear a closer scrutiny.' Hopkins would rather have remained in the background; they themselves had put him in nomination: they must recollect that Henry Hopkins had been public property for a long time. He had been foremost in every good work; it was his aid which made the Savings' Bank what it was. ('Will he give us any beer, Mr. Walker?') 'Yes, if he thought it would do you good! I believe from all my heart he will not withhold anything from you which he feels would do you good.'- ('Can he judge of that better them ourselves?' 'Will he shut up ginger beer and oysters on a Sunday?' 'What did he mean by being good for them?' 'He wants to keep us all on cold water.' Walker then retired 'amidst ironical cheers and laughter.'

When Hopkins spoke he was received with a most indescribable hubbub, and reiterated that he was of retired habits, and should not have come forward unless strongly pressed to do so. 'A Brewer's man - Will you give us the Sunday clause? No I will not. (Great uproar and cheers.) I love you too well to do it. I have only one object in view, and that is your welfare. (Your own pocket, and cheers.) I have been here thirty years, and no man in the colony can say I ever injured him. I hold that we should have a good government. That is of the highest importance, but it must be conducted with economy and industry, and no idlers. (Cheers, and a voice -

'with tea and a few prayers!') Yes, without prayer you will never get to heaven. I wish to see the rising generation brought up in the fear of God: I have done all I can for the benefit of your children, and I never feel greater pleasure than when I am among them. Captain Fisher: 'That's the man we want - straightforward!'

Mr. Walker (apparently a publican: no connection with G.W. Walker) then asked Mr. Hopkins if the report was true that he once conveyed some picks and shovels in his carriage on a Sunday to New Town, that his men might get to work early next morning?

Mr. Hopkins indignantly declared that it was a falsehood. As to State Aid, he was of the opinion that every religion should support itself and ministers would be better paid: in his congregation families gave on average £10 per year. It was well known that the people of Tasmania were never applied to in vain. They were a wealthy people: there would be no want of means. ('Long metre' and cheers.) He would not then take up more of their time, but would wish them 'good morning.' (Cheers, laughter, and hisses.)[11]

The Mercury thought poorly of Hopkins 'exhibition' and described Nutt's argument that having taken good care of himself he would take good care of his constituents, as transparent twaddle. 'Mr. Hopkins, his utter incompetency to appreciate, and total ignorance of the commonest rudiments of philosophic analogy, and parliamentary usage, precluded his saying a word upon the subject. It was just as well that he avoided it, although he could hardly have added to the pain which every one who knew his really good qualities, saw him expose his deficien-

cies by aspiring to a position which neither from intellect nor education is he fitted to hold.'[12] This muddled report leaves the reader wondering as to the intellect and education of the reporter, but clearly a reasonably high quality of candidate was expected. The Courier thought Hopkins filled the bill: with his age, experience, liberal views and independent circumstances he should be elected, for his 'mercantile sagacity and general intelligence might be employed to great advantage in the review of public measures in a place where excited discussion is not likely to occur.'[13] Each candidate was described with a Shakespearean quotation: Hopkins' first was

"* * * his large fortune
Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
All sorts of hearts.

(Timon of Athens)"

A second quotation ran

"I must withdraw and weep

(King John)"[13]

This was because, by the Electoral Act, the proposer and seconder of each candidate must be an elector. It was found that G.W. Walker was not an elector, having failed to put in his form at the right time, and consequently Hopkins' nomination was invalid, and on the eve of the election he withdrew, 'in the most handsome manner.'[14] In an obituary the comment was made that, having no personal ambition, Hopkins was pleased rather than otherwise at this event.[15]

Whether this was true or not, in 1859 he again

stood for Parliament, 'yielding to the earnest requests of an influential body of the electors', or, according to the Mercury, the earnest request of T.D. Chapman.[16] The government was unpopular, and Chapman felt that he could only win the seat by 'placing therein probably the most wealthy and influential gentleman that could be found in the southern portion of Tasmania.'[17] The Chronicle said Hopkins had no chance because the government was so unpopular, and this seemed to be a general opinion.

The Advertiser supported Hopkins, as a self-made man, whose success proved his possession of practical skills useful in Parliament where there was little room for brilliant qualities.[18] The Mercury, however, thought Hopkins a poor candidate. No citizen was more universally or deservedly respected, but Chapman was no friend to Hopkins in dragging him from the calm tranquillity of his declining years (he was 72) to be harassed by turbulent conflicts in a contest he was bound to lose. In Mr. Hopkins Chapman would have one of those benevolent and plastic natures which he could mould and fashion as circumstances required, one who would enter into all his political schemes either because he could not see the mischief those schemes would entail or because he had not the energy of character necessary to oppose them.[19] This sounds most unlike Hopkins; however, at 72 even he must have had less energy than before, and his campaigning was certainly not active. It consisted merely of an advertisement, 'Vote for Mr. Hopkins, One of Tasmania's Best Friends', and a letter published in the papers, stating that Hopkins' political principles were well

known, and if elected he would promote the community's interests.[20] As the Mercury pointed out, Hopkins had played little part in politics and his principles were not well known, and the whole letter was nothing but platitudes. The Mercury condemned Chapman for bringing Hopkins forward, and described votes against Hopkins as showing disgust at this selfish manoeuvre and rejection of government policy. Besides, the electors respected Hopkins too much to desire to see him in the Council at his advanced age.[21]

The election took place on 30th September; there was no scrutineer for Hopkins, and none of his friends appeared when the poll was declared as Low 111 votes, Hopkins 33.[22] The Advertiser blamed the disgraceful apathy of Hopkins' party, while the Mercury assured Hopkins that several people who voted against him said no-one could admire him more, but they felt compelled to vote against him because he was Chapman's candidate. 'We congratulate Mr. Hopkins upon his escape from the trammels of this restless and unscrupulous partizan. There is nothing in his rejection that he need be ashamed of. Had he been less esteemed and respected it is possible he might have been more successful. His friends cannot afford to see his decline of life embittered merely to gratify the political predilections of Mr. T.D. Chapman.'[23]

In a rhyme about the election, circulated as a leaflet, Jack Davies, the editor of the Mercury, was blamed for the result. Not all references are clear now, but the verses ran as follows:-

'THE WAIL OF POLLY HOPKINS ON THE STATE OF THE POLL.

Not a twang was heard, not a MERCURY'S note,
As his place on the Poll he discovered,
Not a voice but despair, escaped from him there,
As he cried "It's by you JACK I'm smothered!"
Sharp and short were the words he said
And he spoke with contempt, hate, and sorrow,
As he mournfully thought of the figure he'd cut,
In the columns of "'Tiser" to-morrow.

He thought as he counted the votes that he had,
And compared them with what JACK had told him,
That he'd been but a dupe in the hands of a knave,
Who grossly and falsely had sold him.
Wildly he swore o'er the money he spent,
And the Butt and the Jeer they had made him,
But little he thought of the agency dodge,
Or the "GRAVES" where JACK DAVIES had laid him.'[24]

(The Tiser referred to the Hobart Town Advertiser.)

So Hopkins' political career ended as ingloriously as it had begun in 1846 with the Patriotic Six crisis. His failure to achieve any success in the relatively easy field of Tasmanian politics shows the limits to which a self-made man could go, as well as the high standard the Mercury, at least, expected of politicians at this time. Hopkins could be called a gentleman and an esquire, play a prominent part in business, religious and charitable work, even preside as a magistrate, and his money was certainly accepted everywhere, but one with his limited intellectual and academic training was not seen by some as adequate for the role of parliamentarian,

while the lower classes resented his paternal outlook. He was, in fact, caught between two stools: he had not quite made the upper classes, while he had long since quitted the lower classes and could no longer be accepted as one of them (not that he showed any signs of wanting this). The weakness of the non-conformist group is shown by this result. Numerically they were far out-numbered by both the working class - few of whom were Congregationalists - at one end of the spectrum, and the Anglicans and Establishment and their supporters (who looked down on them) at the other, and it is worth noting that those successful politicians who Hopkins supported (for example, Alfred Kennerley, another philanthropist) were generally Anglicans. It was not until later in the century, when the Congregational church had become less evangelical and outspoken and more respectable and middle class (largely under Clarke's influence), and its adher-ents tended to be better educated, that they succeeded as parliamentarians. They then did very well.

The failure on Hopkins' part was only in one area, and must be seen against the overall success he had made: Indeed, the praise he received emphasises his success, and the vast amounts of respect, esteem and money he had at this period are even more impressive when compared with others in a similar position. Chapman, for example, went bankrupt in 1864.[25] Alexander McNaughtan was another merchant with similar beginnings to Hopkins, though he is described as "well-educated". He came to the colony in 1841, did well in a wool exporting firm, and became a Justice of the Peace, bank director, chair-man of various companies and was on many committees with

Hopkins. He moved to Launceston in 1858, and went bankrupt in 1864.[26]

William Rout had a very similar career to his cousin Hopkins. After amassing a competence in the business he took over from Hopkins, he quitted it and became involved with many companies, committees and charities, often with Hopkins, Chapman, McNaughtan, and Walker: they were all members of the Anti-Transportation League, for example. Due to a dispute Rout left the Congregational church and joined the ultimate refuge, the Presbyterians.[27] Like his cousin, he retained his money, as did G.W. Walker, the Quaker, whose many interests included primarily the Hobart Savings Bank. Other merchants associated with this group included the Whitesides, Saliers and Facys (all Congregationalists), the Mathers (Quakers), and Alfred Kennerley (Anglican), all noted philanthropists. They formed a middle class urban group who would have supported West's views that man's position in society should be determined not by birth but by effort. Though only loosely allied politically, in that they tended to support the same candidates, they formed the strongest challenge to the pastoral dominance of Tasmanian politics which lasted for most of the century.

George Clarke held these views in a modified way: his outlook was subtly different from Hopkins', in that in Clarke, Hopkins' rather unsophisticated opinions were tempered by education and greater depth of thought. Hopkins valued education as a means of self-improvement, by which a man could obtain better qualifications and a better job, and so lead a better life. To Clarke educa-

tion improved society generally, raising the level of thought and reason. This is simplifying their views, but these tendencies can be seen in Hopkins' encouragement of Ragged Schools and the High School, while Clarke was more interested in tertiary education.

Proposals for a tertiary institution had been made as early as 1834,[28] and various attempts had been made to establish colleges. In the fifties other colonies were founding universities and such an amenity was seen as essential for a civilized country: many Tasmanian patriots felt that Tasmania must have one too. In 1855 a Dr. Crooke asked the Legislative Council for the enormous sum of £20,000 annually for a university. The suggestion was ridiculed but aroused interest, and in 1858 a Tasmania University Bill was introduced, for an examining university with a budget of £1,000 a year. The bill was passed, but so altered that it merely provided for a Council of Education with powers to give two annual scholarships to overseas universities, and to award the degree of Associate of Arts to Tasmanian scholars at home.[29]

The Council was established in 1859: its fifteen members, described as the elite of Tasmanian gentlemen,[30] included Honourables, bishops, a knight, four other clergymen, and George Clarke. While a member of the Council, Clarke gave evidence before a Legislative Council Select Committee on education in 1860. He was impressed particularly with government schools in Tasmania, but thought private schools needed improvement, possibly by a qualifying exam for their teachers. Girls' schools had a particularly low standard. Clarke was the

only witness to press for improvements in girls' education. He recommended great caution in providing government aid for private schools.[31]

Until August 1861 when Clarke resigned due to lack of time, there were 41 meetings. He attended three in 1859, three in 1860, and none in 1861. His contribution was meagre: he once seconded a motion (concerning mathematics examinations) and offered to invigilate during exams.[32] Those meetings he did attend appear to have been extremely dull, and it is not surprising that he found work with his growing congregation more urgent. (He missed the only exciting meeting, where it was reported that part of the exam papers had been disclosed before the exam.) However, to be chosen at all was an honour for Clarke, still in his thirties and a relative newcomer, and shows that he had made an impression on Hobart generally and not merely his own church.

CHAPTER 11

RESPECTED OLD AGE: THE 1860's

In the sixties Hopkins spent a good deal of his time with his family, particularly his Clarke grandchildren, of whom he was very fond. One of the eight children, probably Grace, left her recollections of him.

'I remember driving with him in his heavy old brougham, with the coat of arms on the panel, and the old coachman in sober drab livery and silver buttons, and the sleek bay horses Ben Bolt and Hobby. I remember him walking about the garden of his Summer Home carrying a "spud" to cut off the weeds - or talking to Screwby the "Assigned hand" who remained with him until his death. Screwby was as much an old-world figure as his Master for he used to work in one of those sleeved waistcoats described by Dickens in Pickwick Papers - and on his head one of his master's tall broad-brimmed beaver hats, incredibly dusty and wrinkled like a concertina. Screwby was a Congregationalist, either from conviction or from loyalty, and sat every Sunday morning in the pew behind his Master. Both in Davey Street and New Town Church my grandfather had two pews - one for the family, and one immediately behind for retainers.

Best of all I remember him on Sunday afternoons - sitting in his big red velvet chair (which had a fascinating little shelf that drew out for a foot rest)- a rather shrunken figure with a bald head and fringe of snow-white hair and very keen, very blue eyes. Dressed as always in black broad cloth, with a swallow tailed

coat and a high white stock, wearing a large round gold watch and a fob.

We children stood before him in turn and repeated our Sunday hymns - he loved hymns - and were each rewarded with a bright penny and a handful of pink and white carroway comfits. The elder ones were expected to have learned a new hymn - the younger ones a new verse, while the very youngest earned her bright penny and her comfits every week - with the first four lines of "How doth the little busy bee".'[1]

Screwby, Hopkins' manservant, described politely as a 'retired convict', had been with Hopkins for many years. Grace Clarke thought that Hopkins, a kindhearted person, would have been generous to his assigned servants and Screwby in turn was devoted to his master. He used to live in the room over the stable (this then housed six horses) and would take Grace for rides out to Glenorchy to visit the retired bushranger, Martin Cash. The two old convicts would talk over past times, while seven-year-old Grace listened.[2] The amazing thing here is that neither Hopkins nor the Clarkes appeared to mind the visits, and this speaks of a very easy and trusting relationship between the different classes in society. The bushranging, convict Van Diemen's Land was already seen as history, and could be safely ignored: the colony was no longer a frontier society.

Although one would expect a man nearing eighty to wind up his business interests, there is little evidence that Hopkins did so. Instead he was busy with new enterprises almost up to his death in 1870. He retained many of his old interests: he was Chairman of Directors

of the Hobart Town Gas Company, 1867-1870;[3] Director and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and a director of the two insurance companies.[4] However, his active mind still sought ways to increase Tasmania's production and exploit her natural resources. One of these was guano, first sold from the Lawrence Islands in Bass Strait in 1854. In 1861 the Anglo-Australian Guano Company was selling guano in Hobart, and in 1865 the company was reorganised with Hopkins Chairman of Directors, the other directors being P.O. Fysh, G. Salier, and H. Hopkins junior. Captain Crosby was also involved, and the company produced guano until 1870 at least.[5]

Another natural resource was gold, and in 1867 Hopkins was Chairman of Directors of the Fingal Quartz Crushing Company. (His son Henry was a director in two other similar companies.) There was a great deal of interest in the possibility of gold in the Fingal Valley, but lack of water in summer and too much of it in winter made mining difficult and after some years the ventures folded. Hopkins, however, was actively interested and sank a good deal of money into it.[6]

Yet another new company with which Hopkins was involved was the Wool Manufacturing Company: he was a Director in 1869.[7] He was also chairman of the Mersey and Deloraine Tramway Company,[8] but nothing is known of his actions regarding these last two companies.

Similarly in his charitable work he was active until his death. He was President of the High School from 1861-1870, Vice President and President (1867-1869) of the Ragged Schools' Association and a trustee of the

Mechanics' Institute.[9] He supported the City Mission (for which he collected money until 1864, when he was 77), and the Benevolent Society,[10] and on several occasions gave considerable assistance to the Temperance cause: for example, he presided at the inauguration of its Free Reading Room and Library, saying that now intellectual entertainment was possible for all classes without the slightest expense to parties desirous of availing themselves of the advantages so liberally offered.[11]

Crises found him ready to help. In 1862 the distress of the Lancashire Cotton Operatives, due to the Civil War in the United States, became known. Hopkins, T.D. Chapman and Salier opened an appeal in Hobart, with Hopkins heading the list of contributions with £100: next on the list was £25.[12] In 1869 the Boys' Home Industrial School was established to educate unfortunate boys, apprentice them to a trade and give them a good start in life, and needless to say Hopkins supported this too.[13]

From 1861 to 1870 he was President of the Hobart Savings Bank. This was no sinecure, and the History of the Bank records that 'to his large business experience and close attention to the affairs of the Bank may be greatly attributed its present sound position as to the securities held for loans and the confidence reposed in it by the general public': he was considered to have played an outstanding part in the foundation and development of the Bank.[14] He was also maintaining his long connection with the Bank of Van Diemen's Land: a Director since 1836, he became Chairman in 1864.[15]

The Clarkes, busy with church and family affairs, had less time for charity, though Martha Clarke was on

the committee and later secretary of the Dorcas Society, and they gave money to various societies. The Davey Street church continued to flourish, with Clarke as minister and Hopkins as senior deacon. Hopkins visited candidates for church membership until at least 1863, when he was well into his seventies.

Church records show a busy but largely peaceful decade.[16] In 1863 Clarke retired from a church meeting while his salary was discussed, and raised to £400 a year: at the end of the meeting he showed his gratitude by giving members his benediction instead of the usual prayer. Obviously the church was feeling expansive, for in the same year an organ was ordered, but in fact there was some difficulty in paying for it, and minor financial worries were endemic, with the end of each financial year usually showing a deficit of about £40. In 1865 Clarke asked the church members to try to find a plan to prevent this, but nothing occurred and the deficits continued. Even three special collections in 1869 did not clear the perennial money shortage and indicate, partly that times cannot have been particularly easy even for Clarke's devoted congregation, and partly that he cannot have pushed very hard to clear a relatively small sum. It also means that Henry Hopkins was not willing to solve all the church's financial problems, and shows that he and Clarke's original fear that the church would look to him for support, was well founded.

Generally church business was fairly run-of-the-mill, with Clarke organising Bible classes and social meetings: on one occasion, after a few words of affectionate counsel from the Pastor, the meeting ended

as there was no business to discuss. Clarke gave challenging sermons, according to James Backhouse Walker, whose diaries and journals give a good picture of life among Clarke's circle from this period to the 1890's.[17] Walker, a son of George Washington Walker and grandson of Robert Mather, had been educated at a Quaker school in England, but on his father's death he returned to Hobart and became a lawyer. He was deeply impressed with Clarke: 'his views,' he wrote, 'were liberal, though evangelical in form. They softened all the dogmatism of the evangelical creed and rationalised it to a very considerable degree. His teaching was just what was necessary to lead me without too great a shock to wider views of God and religion.'[18]

Walker began to attend Clarke's chapel in 1862, aged twenty-one. Two years later he joined the Congregational church. He taught in the Sunday School, which had a great effect on him because of the responsibility involved; even greater influence came from his connection with the Berea Mission, where devoted young men tried to help the poor of the surrounding area. The misery, vice and crime of the slums around the mission saddened him, and the urgency of the work impressed him; he was now away from books and theories and faced with stern practical realities. He felt this caused earnest thought and changed him from a boy to a man, also changing everyone connected with it.[19] Clarke was always praised for being able to interest and inspire young people, and the mission work is a good example. It was very difficult, for the main problem confronting enthusiastic philanthropists was the apathy and acceptance of

poor conditions, especially among the working classes.

Clarke kept enthusiasm alive with splendid sermons, in which he emphasised doing rather than thinking, feeling or suffering; finding joy and peace in religion; and looking forward to the heavenly rest, 'a habit of doing which more would, he said, have a great tendency to counteract gloom,' reported Walker.[20] It was a positive but peaceful religion, emotionally restrained, calm and rational, and well suited to the prosperous, ordered and supremely civilized image many middle-class Tasmanians had of their society at this time, when the old evils of transportation and dependence were gone and Tasmania was an independent state.

Though earlier in the century Congregationalism had had a large working-class component, by now it and its members had changed, and it appealed most to the urban middle classes, and Clarke in particular drew his strength from this group. He had an authoritative position within his church, rare for a Congregationalist minister: when he was absent from town, church business would be postponed until his return.

In 1867 a crisis shook the Davey Street church, and the difference in the way it was handled from similar crises in the thirties shows clearly how the church had changed. A member of the church, Harcourt, was accused of smuggling. He had brought in goods without paying duty, and his lawyer said that though legally guilty he was not morally so, as his act had been unintentional, for he forgot his invoice when he went to pick up his goods. The court, however, said Harcourt's box of goods had a secret compartment carefully contrived

to conceal goods from customs officers.[21] Clarke told a church meeting that Harcourt had incurred legal penalties, read his letter of explanation, and said that there was no evidence condemning him. The church voted on the issue and unanimously acquitted Harcourt, trusting he would be more careful in the future.[22] Walker was appalled. 'O tempora O mores!' he wrote, and said he had had a talk with Rout about the matter: 'he says he voted against his conscience!'[23] Clarke preached a sermon in which he 'came out strong on covetousness with special reference evidently to Harcourt's case of smuggling.'

The Davey Street Sunday School was flourishing in the sixties, largely due to Hopkins' farsightedness in encouraging Charles Walch to teach there. Walch became Superintendent in 1862 and was most successful. He respected the children's feelings and stressed that their real needs must be met, so that they were interested. Dry, dull materials did no good at all, he said, and told his teachers that their success was to be gauged not by the depth of what they said, but by what the child took in. These novel ideas made for a very successful school. Numbers rose, with many non-Congregationalists and even Catholics sending their children there. Hopkins gave an occasional address, distributed rewards, and continued to visit the school occasionally until he was in his eighties.[24]

The Congregational Union also kept Clarke and Hopkins busy, especially with the great excitement of the establishment of a theological college in Hobart in 1861. Hopkins had been interested in this project for over twenty years, and had offered a property if the

Colonial Missionary Society would provide a tutor. Nothing came of this, but in the 1840's a church member, Miss Watkins, left her Davey Street property to the Union for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom, and enthusiasm for a college grew. In the fifties, however, an Australian college was mooted, but plans fell through, and in 1869 Tasmania decided to go ahead.[25] Clarke felt that any college should be Australia-wide, for with less than 3,000 Tasmanian Congregationalists a college here was impractical; he was overruled, and the College came into existence. Hopkins paid £600 for the building and laid the foundation stone with great ceremony in April 1861. Everyone stressed that mighty things grew from small beginnings, while Hopkins said hard work was needed, and encouraged the two students with the amazing statement that he had never heard of a gospel minister who was not successful.[26]

The College opened in 1862 with three students, one supported by Hopkins. Clarke, Miller and other clergymen were the tutors: Clarke, typically, supported the college enthusiastically once his views had been overruled. In 1863 the College had two students, and in 1866 two more were admitted, but of the five only one was ordained and the College had folded by 1869.[27] Hopkins' disappointment at the failure of one of his pet schemes was slightly alleviated by the founding of a similar college in Sydney, which he endowed with a £1,000 bursary.[28] (This college also folded after a few years.)

It was a decade of expansion in the Tasmanian church, with Hopkins assisting in the building of three new

churches. 'There is scarcely a chapel or schoolroom in connection with us that he had not assisted to build by his generous gifts,' wrote a Congregationalist. He also gave £100 to the building fund of the Anglican cathedral.[29]

The Melbourne Argus considered that Hopkins 'was always ready to lend liberal assistance to what appeared to him a deserving object,'[30] and J.B. Walker agreed that Hopkins considered the merits of each case separately. Walker, Crosby and Giblin went to see 'old Hopkins' to try to get money for some unspecified object: 'Not v. successful.'[31]

Hopkins did help many individuals, however, and an obituarist wrote, 'Of him it may be truly said that when the eye saw him then it blessed him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. Many an orphan child owes its education and position in the world to his fostering care. While on many occasions he used his wealth and liberal gifts to provoke other men to generous deeds, yet quite as often he did good by stealth and blushed to find it fame. There are cases where the heart can feel, but the tongue cannot utter the generous kindness of his timely help.'[32] Hopkins is said to have used his position in various banks to help many people in need, and set businesses on their feet.[33]

An example of Hopkins' assistance is that in 1870 he transferred £600 lent to the Trustees of the High School to George Clarke and Charles Walch, the interest to be paid to Mrs. Mary Gladwine, and on her death to the education of her two sons in the High School.[34] The only group apparently not on the receiving end were Roman

source of irreparable mischief. It would be wrong to despise these doubts, dangerous to evade them and supercilious to refuse to consider them. Christianity was a reasonable faith, based on facts, which were capable of being proved, and need not fear any amount of light. His aim was to stress the importance of ascertaining what were and what were not the data on which the truth of Christianity was suspended. His three lines of argument had been testimony, construction and power, which all converged in the same conclusion.[43] Walker considered this "the best lecture yet - very good indeed'[44] while the Governor expressed the hope that they be published. This statement was greeted with cheers by the capacity audience, which included members of 'the several religious denominations'. However, when Clarke gave a lecture several months later, the audience only numbered twenty and it was adjourned; at the second attempt there were still fewer people, and it was put off until the next year.[45]

One of Clarke's great interests was in the public endowment of religion, and he played a prominent part in the movement to have this abolished. In June 1867 he headed a deputation on the subject to the Premier, and the occasion is recorded in the Hobart Town Punch in an article by J.B. Walker. Walker was in fact a supporter of Clarke, but tried to make the article objective. The 'Anti-State Aid Deputation Extraordinary' marched through the streets impressively, though was nervous in front of the Premier. Clarke, the spokesman, was 'a civil spoken gentleman, so tall and thin that he seemed to bend with his own weight. He did not seem quite at ease,

having rather the air of being ashamed of his followers. He said that the deputation which now waited on the. Government represented a very large proportion of the wealth, intelligence and respectability of the Colony' at which several members tried not to look self-conscious. Clarke said everyone should go his own way to heaven, pay for metalling his own road, and not crib his neighbour's materials. The fact was the roads went very different ways, commented Walker, and he had a suspicion that some ended in a quite opposite direction, going to the same end as the road which the good intentions of the present Government seemed to be going. Walker ridiculed the other members of the deputation, and concluded that the various religions should fight it out, and the Government save money.[46]

Shortly after this occasion Clarke published a pamphlet, entitled 'Objections to the Policy of Perpetuating State Aid to Religion in Tasmania.' Published by Walch's, it was favourably received by several newspapers. Clarke felt that State Aid to religion 'is inconsistent with the claims of reason, and the reverence that is due to the sanctity of truth - that it involves social injustice and unwarrantable pressure on the exercise of conscience - and that as a policy it is fraught with embarrassment to the administration of the civil power.'[47] 'If all his readers were Christians their verdict would be unanimous in favour of his views,'[48] wrote the Examiner, while the Mercury praised the pamphlet as saying all that need to be said in a way which would not give offence to anyone.[49] Religious endowment was finally ended in 1868.

Clarke's opinion came out also in several private documents. Discussing the hypothetical death of a child before baptism, he says this cannot be terrible. If it were, there would be two alternatives: either the child deserves to be sent to hell, or it does not. Both are abhorrent, and pregnant with practical evils to society, and those who held the theory had never put the case fairly before their own minds. This is a good example of Clarke's reasoned judgment, and of his desire for religion to be rational, pleasant and fair. Another example of his trying to temper difficult questions was noted by J.B. Walker, who discussed Eternal Punishment with Clarke in 1869. 'He does not believe in it - but can't make up his mind to an alternative so does not speak of it.' Walker had long theological talks with Clarke. Once they discussed annihilation, and though Clarke could not make up his mind on the question, 'he thinks he shall say something to astonish his congregation. Even old Hopkins thinks...' but here the paper ends.[50]

1867 was the year in which Hopkins' career reached its climax. First he travelled to Melbourne to lay the foundation stone of the new Congregational church, replacing the earlier one he had helped build in 1839. Hopkins was fêted as a founder of the church in Australia.[51]

Back in Hobart he gave a Tea Meeting to mark the eightieth anniversary of his baptism, and the forty-fifth of his arrival in Hobart. Five hundred people were

asked, including teachers of all Protestant Sunday Schools and Ragged Schools, ministers, politicians and friends. The venue was the Town Hall, and it was a grand affair.[52]

After a 'sumptuous" repast had been enjoyed by Hopkins and his guests, the Governor arrived, the National Anthem was sung, and His Excellency made a speech. Predictably this lauded Hopkins, not only for his energy and determination in making a fortune, but for his charitable activity, where his object had been to induce others to imitate his example, and to help others to help themselves. Hopkins replied, urging his hearers to make Tasmania eminent among the colonies. He had seen all the colonies, and scarcely one was equal to Tasmania from a moral point of view. Six more speeches followed. "We can only say that if all the good advice given there was carried into practice, Hobart Town would soon be an astonishing place,' wrote J.B. Walker in the Hobart Punch.[53] The incense, he continued, rose so thickly that one could hardly see the original old gentleman for the smoke.

The hall thronged with eminent and respectable citizens, the Governor not only chairing proceedings but fulsome in his praise, five hundred people, including a bishop, fed and entertained at his expense - the whole evening was proof of Hopkins' success. At eighty, his origins and lack of education and polish could be ignored, and he could see himself accepted by the best in Hobart society, his success acknowledged, his generosity admired. It had taken forty-five years, but he was now among the top, and his children and grandchildren could

consider themselves the equal of anyone. Whether this had been his aim is impossible to say, but it was certainly the result.

That he himself was pleased is shown by a note written on his carefully-kept bill of his first investment. 'Sept 10 1867 I have this day given Tea to Sunday School teach and friends in the Two Town Hall the Governor in the chair 13 E...[illegible] Ministers and [illegible] to celebrate my 80 Birthday God [illegible] me with good health.'[54] No other events, not even his wife's death, were recorded on this bill.

The Tea Meeting can also be seen as marking the general acceptance that the Congregational church was a respectable body of equal status with any other church. Moderate, intellectual opinions, respected ministers, and thoroughly respectable members, all publicly displayed and admired, meant that the church, no less than Hopkins, had overcome its working-class background and had joined the respectable middle classes of the community.

CHAPTER 12

THE EARLY 1870's

In 1869 the Congregational Union decided to publish a monthly newspaper, the Tasmanian Independent. A Literary Committee was chosed to organise it, and it elected Clarke as Editor. The first edition came out in February 1870. Generally the paper contained about ten pages, with local news of churches and church interest, an editorial, letters, special items, overseas news (largely of churches) a children's serial and advertisements. The cost was three shillings a year.

The remaining issues[1] show that Clarke's main interests were opposing State Aid, encouraging education, and pressing for a properly enforced licensing law, which would regulate the number of hotels and conditions in them. While holding drunkenness responsible for many evils, he urged readers to keep a sense of proportion; there were many decent, orderly landlords, and total abstinence need not be the aim.[2] (Indeed, while he and Hopkins supported temperance societies, they themselves drank in moderation, and the Clarkes brewed their own quite potent dandelion ale. J.B. Walker tried to give up alcohol, and lasted one month.)[3]

Clarke's religious comments were tolerant: 'None of us hold the truth without alloy. None present is without some measure of distortion.' He praised the 'general heritage of the catholic faith which can absorb the broken lights of our minor differences in the greater glory of the common salvation,' while readers were urged not to be captious and cavilling at trifles, but

to look at questions from other people's point of view. A dispute between Roman Catholics and Anglicans was likened to the schoolboy's 'Please Sir, he's making faces at me,' but when a Catholic revivalist priest died he wrote, 'We may think that the interests of the Kingdom of Christ might be better served by other means than those which the late Rev. Father advocated with such zeal, but no candid man can withhold from his memory the tribute of admiration for intense earnestness.'[4] At a time when many Protestants regarded all Catholics with abhorrence, this type of praise was rare. Presbyterians and Wesleyans were also often admired, while though the exhibitions of the revival movement are deplored, this should not blind readers to the good achieved; on the other hand, 'we have no sympathy with what is called ritualism,'[5] and the exclusiveness and lack of co-operation of the Church of England are gently criticised on occasion.[6]

In general Clarke was, like Hopkins, 'utterly opposed to everything that saps self reliance and self-respect,' - begging, slavers ('who is the savage and who the heathen?'), sectarianism - and praises any institution whereby the wealthy can help the less fortunate without diminishing the latters' independence or self-esteem. The Hobart Town Working Men's Club was particularly highly praised as a place for recreation, keeping men from amusements which degrade and debase. It had been criticised by some for keeping men from their homes, but Clarke said it was easy for the rich to say men should be at home: the poor have uncomfortable houses, and this is not their fault but that of the social

system.[7] What poor women should do was not mentioned.

Clarke was particularly proud of the Tasmanian education system, whereby boys could work their way from the bottom to the top by capacity and industry, with no aid of position or wealth.[8] The Ragged Schools, the City Mission and the Public Library are also praised, and education for girls encouraged.[9] There is mild criticism of the inequality of the existing social system - 'improvement in that respect must necessarily be a slow and difficult process' - and horror at the activities of the Communists in Paris (this being 1871).[10]

Clarke's tendency to sit on the fence is occasionally shown: yes, teach Science, but keep Latin and Greek as well, while he had an equivocal attitude to Queen Victoria. Some statements are questionable: 'A praying nation has never yet perished.' However, Clarke's basic principles are clear: tolerance ('we have no right to judge them until we know what there was to excite them'), the general courage of your convictions ('peace at any price is a very cowardly maxim'),[11] and the removal of barriers which hindered a man making the most of his talents. While these last two ideas were commonly held by the respectable classes at the time, Clarke's tolerant outlook was rare. Other contemporary church papers tended to be condescending about others (Anglican) or fiercely sectarian (other Protestants).

After a year, the editor was able to announce that the paper was doing well and the circulation increasing, notably among non-Congregationalists. There was also no lack of advertisers, though predictably these were largely Clarke's friends: Whitesides, Salier, Walch and

Mather, for example, ran large advertisements in every issue. Hopkins was also a keen supporter of the paper.[12]

The Independent reported at length the annual meeting of the Congregational Union in 1870: Clarke, the Chairman, gave the address. He stressed that all remember their similarities as Christians with those of other denominations (though clearly wishing the other denominations would reciprocate), the need to read God's word rather than about God's word, and the need for a close eye to be kept on any possibility of renewed State Aid to religion. Still, he concluded, 'let us strive to live at peace with all men. While firmly holding and frankly avowing our convictions, let us be patient, courteous and conciliatory towards those who think otherwise. Let us try to understand men of all sorts and of all opinions around us.'[13] What happened when holding your convictions and understanding others people's clashed, as in the State Aid question, was not stated. From Clarke's lengthy opposition to State Aid it would appear that in really vital situations other people's views were to be rejected.

The Tasmanian Independent also ran a long article when, in August 1870, Henry Hopkins laid the foundation stone (the last of a long series) of the Memorial Congregational Church in Hobart. Built in memory of Frederick Miller, to replace the earlier Brisbane Street chapel, the church had been supported by Hopkins; he gave £500 on the condition that five persons in the congregation each gave £100. The ceremony took place on Hopkins' 83rd birthday, in front of a large gathering of people. A historical document with copies of contempor-

ary newspapers and visiting cards of H. Hopkins Esq., and the late Mrs. Hopkins, were placed in a cist, and Hopkins then laid the stone, 'in a very energetic style, to the satisfaction of himself and all present.' His speech was short. Clarke made a longer speech, in which he said (rather tactlessly) that this marked the end of Hopkins' public life, and that he was sure all present wished that when their venerable friend heard God's call, he would be ready to go.[14] Hopkins did not preside over the inevitable Tea Meeting in the evening, as he was afraid of the excitement causing him harm.[15]

He was still active in many affairs. Although in July 1870 he resigned as Chairman of the Hobart Town General Sessions, he remained Chairman of the Gas Company, the Tasmanian Insurance Company, and the Mersey and Deloraine Tramway Company, while in the last few years of his life he was busy giving money away. He gave £1,000 to a school for missionaries' children, at last started in Sydney, and over £9,000 to the London Missionary Society,[16] who admired his just appreciation of the right use of money. In a letter to the Society he wrote:-

'If our rich men were to think what riches are given for they would feel it a pleasure to assist you. Sixty years ago I wrote in my cash book that I would devote one tenth of my income to the spread of the Gospel and the welfare of the poor. I had not much then but I have since been able to give away large sums every year for many years.'[17]

Even Hopkins' giving had to come to an end. In his early eighties he realised death was approaching, but,

said Clarke, he was not afraid. 'He thought that that kind of teaching which stimulated an anxiety about the process of dying had been carried too far, and could find little support in the language of Scripture. He trusted calmly in Christ... and had no fears or doubts about the issue.'[18] He died on September 24, 1870, aged eighty-three, and was buried at New Town in the same tomb as his wife Sarah.

Flags in the city were flown at half-mast, and his death, though expected, caused a general stir.. All newspapers printed fulsome obituaries, and when the funeral took place, many banks, offices and shops were closed.[19] Many of the colony's notables attended the service, and also a funeral sermon delivered by Clarke a week later.

Clarke reported that he had discussed this with Hopkins, who had not wanted it to be gloomy, but had been anxious that it should refer to the wants of the living rather than the remembrance of the dead. He wanted his basic belief brought out: that everyone needs salvation by belief in God. He thought much popular Christianity lacking in depth, that there was a tendency to look on Christianity merely as one of the many forces in society, with respect for its secular utility rather than its transcendent claims. 'I have tried to state it in other terms than the set phrases of theology,' added Clarke, 'because I believe that many of us lose the sense of such accustomed words in their sound.'[20]

Hopkins' perspicacity was thus shown right to the end of his life, for he could see the dangers in the new style of Christianity and wanted some return to the full-

bodied, forceful, all-embracing, rather intolerant and domineering style of religion with which he had been familiar in his youth. He feared that the more reasoned and persuasive Christianity, typified by Clarke, would lead to religion being taken too lightly, and to a certain extent his fears were realised over the years. In the 1870's this was in the future, and it took farsightedness to realise potential danger. He also realised the good points of the change, and Clarke commented that though Hopkins had been 'trained under forms and systems of doctrinal expression, which are held much less rigidly in our day, he was not so fettered by their influence as might under the circumstances have been expected.'[21]

At this time also, with many obituaries of Hopkins, came the bowdlerised version of his life on which most subsequent accounts are based. In this Hopkins' lowly background and lack of education are lightly skimmed over, and his real life seen as beginning with his arrival in Hobart. He then founded the wool trade, established the Congregational church (the split with Miller was never mentioned), quickly became wealthy, was very charitable, and played a leading part in many Tasmanian institutions. His political failures are ignored or only briefly mentioned and excused. This version of Hopkins' life has been so frequently retold[22] that it was very difficult to track down facts which point to any differences. To the Victorians, Hopkins was a fine example of a man making good by honest effort, then using his wealth to good purpose; in fact, wrote an obituarist, 'a careful study of Mr. Hopkins' life will go far to show that it is possible to unite devout religious habits with

those of a thorough business man.' Hopkins' favourite Biblical quotation was 'Godliness is profitable unto all things.'[23]

His death was soon felt in philanthropic circles. In 1871 the Congregational Union wrote to England, urging extra help, needed chiefly in consequence of Hopkins' death and the consequent drop in contributions.[24]

However, his will provided some comfort. Many charities were left £100, and the same sum was left to provide Testaments for Tasmanian children.[25]

To contemporary obituarists there were three reasons for Hopkins' importance: his founding of the wool industry, of the Congregational church, and his philanthropy and fine example of a Christian life. More than a century later his significance can be seen in the way his life mirrored contemporary society. In his early days Australia was a frontier society, still expanding rapidly with great opportunities for energetic and shrewd men, and Hopkins had the qualities needed for success in this environment. His simple, strong, religious views were typical of many successful business men of the era, while his lack of education and culture mattered little in Hobart's commercial society. The highest colonial classes might have tried to recreate English upper class mores, but they were only a minority, somewhat scorned by men like Rout and Hopkins who had little desire to join them in the social whirl. Where Hopkins was atypical of many of his contemporaries was in his charitable concerns, but even so there were other men, like G.W. Walker and Mather, who combined business and philanthropy, and as the colony grew more

prosperous their numbers increased.

During the 1840's and 1850's the frontier society gave way (in Tasmania at any rate) to a more settled community. Opportunities for expansion were few, and frontier types left for the mainland, particularly during the gold rushes. Tasmania was left with those who loved a stable, ordered existence, who either did not wish to make a fortune (like Clarke) or had already done so (like Hopkins). At the same time the influence of Victorian ideals of respectability, decency, concern to help the deserving poor, and to build a better community generally, and the idea of progress towards the ultimate perfection, were being taken up by the Tasmanian middle classes. The end of the bad old days of transportation and the beginning of the brilliant new era of independence particularly encouraged ideas of improvement and progress. Here again Hopkins had developed from his early days so as to fit into the pattern. He had become an ardent patriot, a keen supporter of schemes to improve opportunities for the poor to help themselves and to develop Tasmanian resources, and his life was a model of respectability and decency. He did not patronise the burgeoning cultural societies (for example Royal Society, founded to encourage intellectual development), but in other respects he was a good example of a typical middle-class colonist, with his rather Dickensian early period left decades before.

One noticeable omission in Hopkins' life is much mention of convicts. The similar lack of interest in aborigines is easily explicable: Hopkins was a townsman and had little to do with the natives, and they were not

industrious enough to appeal to him as objects of charity. However, he lived nearly fifty years in a colony where the convict system was a prominent feature, and had convict servants, from flighty Ann Darter to the faithful Screwby, but seemed to ignore their existence as much as he could. There are various possible explanations. Like the aborigines, many convicts did not try to fit into decent society and therefore were outside his interests, and the Congregational church associated itself with the urban middle and lower middle classes and took virtually no interest in the unpromising mass of convicts (with the work of Miller and Sarah Hopkins rare examples). Hopkins' life was quite busy enough, with business, family, church and charities to the deserving, without including the great numbers of undeserving. If they did not choose to take advantage of the facilities offered by the Mechanics' Institute, Temperance Society, Working Men's Club, churches, or Savings Bank - and most ex-convicts did not - then they deserved their fate. This was a typical (and quite understandable, given the society) attitude at the time: nevertheless, the fact that a man could live so long in Tasmania and virtually ignore the system is telling. Screwby, the exception, displayed middle-class-approved virtues of industry and faithfulness, and so could be said to have left his convict past behind. Even so, he only received £10 in his master's will.

The faithful who were rewarded - George and Martha Clarke - now became comfortably wealthy, and moved into Summerhome. Their lack of financial worries is shown by Clarke's action in the church: in 1871 he volunteered to

have his stipend reduced to £350 a year. Even this did not clear up the church's financial problems, and the following year Clarke was only paid £175. There was still a deficit.[26]

In 1871 Clarke gave a course of lectures on the English Bible, and a sermon printed in 1872, Churches not Temples, warns against confusing shrines, ritual and altars with the real presence of God.[27] His preaching was widely known. In The Tasmanian Lily, written in 1873 to portray Tasmanian life, the non-Congregationalist James Bonwick described only one church, the Davey Street Chapel. It was in thorough good taste, and in it he heard a sermon which was 'logical, profoundly suggestive, full of learning, happy in illustration, and with a delicacy of finish, and a purity of piety, that could not fail to please and benefit a fastidious audience.'[28]

It was probably at this time that an event occurred which Clarke described in 1879. A book had appeared a few years before claiming that Napoleon was the beast in the Apocalypse. It produced great effect, even in Hobart, fairly turning the heads of many people 'from whom one might have expected better things... I got into trouble for denouncing it as a wild and irreverent travesty of Holy Scripture. People talked about nothing else and it was hard to get them to pay attention to ordinary life. In this way religion becomes a fitful fever of the soul, instead of a calm, quiet, restful spirit of communion with God and consciousness of his presence.'[29]

In May 1873 Clarke resigned from the Davey Street church, to take his family on a visit to England; 'also

I must retire for a short period or run the risk of breaking down before my time.'[30] He told church members that he pledged himself to correct misapprehensions respecting the colony which he believed were held in England, and to ask for help in preaching the Gospel in the scattered districts of Tasmania.

The church wrote to Binney asking for a replacement. Hobart, they said, was a small town but the church was fairly well attended. People were less dependent on church polity than on the minister and his character and capacity. 'Our general experience, especially with the better, cultural part of the Congregation... is that people are attracted by the personal qualities of the minister of the place, worshipping with us at first under reserve, then they settle down, and at length become educated by our practices and our principles.' They requested a man like their present pastor, 'a gentleman, one who can speak occasionally on the questions of the day, with some sympathy with modern thought, but beyond and above it we care most for the old old, story.' The status of the Congregational body was exceptionally high, and the congregation included politicians and professional men, merchants and tradesmen who exercised an influence on public affairs out of proportion to their number. 'We are anxious to retain such men. Mr. Clarke, partly perhaps by the accidents of his position, but more by his character, intellectual tastes and personal bearing, has done much to keep up the general reputation of the body.' A stipend of £350 was offered, and the church described as flourishing and peaceful.[31]

Binney wrote back that £350 was not likely to be enough for such a man, but that he would do what he could.[32]

The church held a Tea and Public Meeting, where Clarke's unassuming gentleness, prudent counsels, unblemished reputation, and consistent conduct were praised, and he was thanked for editing the Tasmanian Independent, now merged with the Christian Witness. He made a farewell sermon which J.B. Walker thought disappointing,[33] and the family left Hobart in February 1874.

In London Clarke obtained a temporary position in a church, and the children pursued their education. Early in 1875 Clarke spent three months on a Cook's tour of the Middle East, and later the whole family travelled extensively around Britain, and to France and Switzerland. Apparently, however, most family members missed Tasmania, and were happy when the day came to embark for home.[34] They arrived in Hobart at the end of 1877.

CHAPTER 13

THE CLARKES' RETURN

The inevitable Tea Meeting was held in January 1878 to welcome the Clarkes back to Hobart. Widely reported in the colonial press, it received a column of editorial comment in the Mercury, which described the event as a gratifying episode in the social history of Tasmania, in which the gentle, unobtrusive worth of Mrs Clarke was recognised by such a representative assemblage, a truly Catholic gathering; by a congregation second in influence to none in Tasmania; and by personal friends, leading men of all parties and denominations.[1]

Seven hundred people were present, including many clergymen, and the inevitable Walches, Giblins, and other members of the Clarkes' circle; Philip Fysh (another member of Clarke's congregation and a rising politician) was chairman. An excellent tea was enjoyed by all, then the tables were cleared and business commenced. After several welcoming speeches, Clarke rose to reply, saying first how glad they all were to be back in their dear old home in Tasmania. There were great - almost overwhelming - attractions in the old country, and he had felt them. He had had to resist very urgent solicitations to remain, and friends had remonstrated with him for what they thought pig-headedness in returning to the little colony. But the family's strong love for home never wavered. Now he was back, he was delighted to see signs of progress - should he say civilisation? - and prosperity among them: new buildings, a railway, and

a greater amount of business.

While he had been away he had been trying to enjoy himself as much as possible. He had also met members of all the different schools of thought; he had done so on principle, in literary, political and religious matters. He trusted he had learned something from this, to think more considerately of his fellow men, more humbly of himself, and to have greater charity. He went on to say (without any obvious increase in charity) that he had heard a great many bad sermons and a few good ones.

A question people were very fond of asking was, as to what the English people thought of Tasmania. He must tell them the truth, which was that the great bulk of the English people knew very little about it, and cared very much less. However, one of the things that excited boundless amazement was the relationship of the Australian colonies one to another - the hostile tariffs and contending interests - the English were amazed at the anachronistic system and everyone wondered why the colonies were not federated (applause). He deplored the political situation in Tasmania: there were no political parties based on principles but they heard of one section of the House going in and another going out, and the whole thing turned upon personal likes or dislikes (loud applause). He was afraid they needed a great deal of education on these matters yet, but there was no fast road to a better system, and people must learn the lessons for themselves if they could (hear,hear). It was not his province to speak on this subject, but he looked with great anxiety to the political future of the colony, and was afraid that great interests would be

sacrificed if they were to allow the prejudices and antipathies and likings and dislikings of personal parties to prevail (applause).

Clarke recommended that Tasmanians avoid colonial 'blowing', for which the colony had a bad reputation in England; but still to remember that a small nation was not necessarily unimportant - the Holy Land was a good example. 'All of us, rich and poor, are now engaged in the duty of building up a nation' and he praised Tasmania's climate and scenery.

The Hon. H. Butler expressed his gratification at Clarke's return. The country had got a grand prize, and he hoped that whenever occasion offered, it would show its appreciation of his high intelligence and culture (applause). After four more similar speeches, the meeting ended.

Clarke was made a deacon at the Davey Street church, for his replacement, the Rev. Bolton Stafford Bird (later a politician) still had some time to serve. It was not until September 1879 that Clarke was re-elected Pastor, though he had carried out various ministerial duties.[2]

In mid-1879 Clarke became involved in a considerable disturbance, when Hobart was visited by Pastor Chiniquy.[3] An ex-Catholic priest turned Presbyterian on a nine month lecture tour of Australia, Chiniquy arrived in Hobart in June 1879. On the first Sunday of his visit he gave two sermons contrasting the Catholic and Protestant churches; on Monday night he addressed a meeting in the Town Hall on the inflammatory topic 'Why I and 25,000 of my fellowcountrymen left the Church of Rome'. During this lecture he performed his usual parody of

Catholic worship, told stories of the evils of priests and nuns, and made 'ribald slanders' of Catholic women.

The parody of the mass, by an ordained priest, could seem valid to Catholics, and not unnaturally many Catholics disliked Chiniquy's display, particularly as the speech took place in public property. At Tuesday's speech many Catholics were present and shouted Chiniquy down: the meeting was abandoned, and similar disturbences occurred on Thursday. By now tempers on both sides were inflamed and clashes between the two groups feared, especially after the Catholics announced a mass meeting on the Domain where an effigy of the pastor was to be burnt. Special constables were sworn in, the Volunteer Corps of the army called out, and Hobartians treated to the spectacle of the Army marching down Macquarie Street dragging two howitzers. However, Bishop Murphy dispersed the Domain meeting and Chiniquy gave his Friday talk undisturbed, but did not speak in the Town Hall again.

Reaction to Chiniquy's visit varied. A large number of Protestants (including Congregational ministers) supported him, and many a diatribe on Freedom of Speech cloaked strong anti-Catholic sentiment. The Reverend Price in Launceston, for example, described as an 'unscrupulous, intolerant anti-Catholic Pharisee' by the Catholic Standard, gave a sermon entitled 'Let Us Alone', and published it as a tract. A second Congregationalist minister was described as one of the prime movers in the business.[4]

George Clarke was one of the few non-conformist clergymen who deplored Chiniquy and his sentiments. In

a sermon called 'Quiet Godliness', later published, he criticised cravings for artificial stimulants and attempts to arouse emotions. 'Are the results satisfactory? Is the tone they induce healthy? Do they really conduce to the harmony or the efficiency of our churches? Do they add to their members? Do they, in any appreciable degree, convert the ungodly to manifest newness of life?

'And what are we to say of the wave of passionate and maddening excitement that has just passed over our community...Suppose the right of public meeting had never been threatened, what do you think of those lectures as an incitement to Christian living? No-one will pretend that there was anything in them to conciliate the Roman Catholic to a patient hearing, or that they were calculated in the slightest degree to convert him from his errors. The things said were said in a way to rasp the feeling, much more than to convince the judgement. The excitement they raised was the excitement of angry passion on both sides, to an extent that makes it, to me, the saddest thing I have seen in this community for forty years. What good could ever come out of such a course I cannot imagine. To suppose that that sort of thing can promote the cause of religion is, I think, a very sad mistake...if the attempt to revive or recommend religion by artificial excitement is futile, it is still more so to think of doing it by inflaming the mutual resentment of Protestant and Catholic...it would be better for us all, if, instead of rushing hither and thither to satisfy our sensational craving for emotion, we were more careful to "study to be quiet, and to do our own business."'[5]

This sermon caused a considerable stir. J.B. Walker said Clarke gained kudos for it;[6] it was praised in the Mercury, but in reply the paper printed two letters,[7] both critical of Clarke. 'A very dangerous doctrine' was how 'Alpha' described Quiet Godliness, and cited many prophets of unquiet godliness who had made the church what it was today - Saint Paul, Luther, Wesley, and so on. (The Editor of the Mercury omitted Alpha's personal criticism of Clarke.) 'N' agreed that Christianity was an aggressive religion, that a Christian was obliged to try to rescue his brethren from error, and warned people that just because Clarke was held in great respect did not mean he was infallible. Clarke replied that comparison between Chiniquy and Saint Paul seemed not a little grotesque. He, Clarke, had not shrunk from controversy, but hoped it would never take on the form of exasperating his adversaries and inflaming the passions of his friends. It grieved him to be forced to say anything critical, but 'I must speak out my convictions of the mischief we do by giving our countenance to that craving for stagey and sensational religion which puts emotion for faith.'[8]

Five letters appeared in response.[9] Two supported Clarke, three brought out the usual aggressive arguments, with 'Hold the Fort' concluding that Clarke's sermon was 'ill timed, a discouragement to true Protestants, and as indicating a split in the camp triumph to an insidious and grasping enemy.' It seems fairly clear that these writers had enjoyed the Chiniquy drama, enjoyed having their passions inflamed, and took no notice of Clarke's rational arguments. However, Clarke's congregation and

friends supported him, and among the general educated public his standing rose as a result of his appeal for tolerance. The Catholic Standard, of course, praised him,[10] while in 1901 an admirer wrote, 'Though we differ in religious belief I cannot forget how in past years you sympathised with the Catholic community in Hobart when their cherished religious convictions were ruthlessly assailed by irreligious firebrands, and how you quietly but forcibly protested against their vile mimicry of our Holy Eucharistic rites. Would that the noble example you set on that occasion had been followed by others.'[11]

Clarke's own congregation were pleased to have him back, and J.B. Walker could once more note Clarke's fine and striking sermons. In general Walker thought Congregational clergy too 'dissenterish'[12] and was definite in his preference for Clarke.. 'My good resolution of going to church being frustrated - as I found out on getting to the Church door that Mr. [illegible] was to preach instead of Mr. Clarke,'[13] he wrote. Indeed, in 1880 the New South Wales Independent wrote that 'it has been a matter for wonderment that Mr. Clarke should have cared to labour for so many years in a scope so unworthy of his great abilities'[14] as Hobart. Sad to say Walker, a great Tasmanian patriot, left no comment on this.

In the 1880's the Davey Street church saw continued expansion and a large and influential congregation, but Clarke's gentle leadership kept dramatic incidents to a minimum. In 1883 new Sunday School rooms were built, with Walches, Giblins, Walkers, and Clarkes contributing

nearly £500 between them.[15] Walch now established his dream Sunday School, numbers rose to over a hundred children, and the school was described as exerting a wonderful influence throughout the colony.[16] Walker, a teacher, said he hoped rational, anti-dogmatic, spiritual Christianity was taught, and that the only dogma was that goodness is religion and Christianity.[17] The success of the school was not only due to Walch's efforts, for Clarke, recollected Miss Aella Giblin, a pupil at the school, 'attracted round him a group of young people ready to take up the work of progress and from them must have come the amazing band which gathered ready for any call.'[18] Clarke's appeal to the young is frequently mentioned, and they found him an inspiring yet not dominating figure. W.R. Giblin described him as 'a dynamic character with a wonderful gift of oratory and strong dramatic sense and a power of single direct purpose.'[19] In 1889 he preached a sermon about the dock labourers (this was the year of the great strike in England) which reduced nearly everyone in the church to tears.[20]

Clarke played a leading role in the Congregational Union, and as chairman in 1880, the Jubilee of the church's foundation, gave the address. 'I do wish,' he said, 'that your choice had fallen upon a better man. There is nothing for it, however, but to try and do my duty.'[21] He said the church should be rigid in principle and flexible in form; forms had changed over fifty years, with more attention to the way in which worship was expressed, while entry into the church was not the spiritual vivisection it had once been. He could not

comment on modern piety: was it more soft, sentimental and pliable than the robust piety of earlier years? Present dangers he described as scepticism, superstition and sentimentalism.

In 1882 Clarke told the Union that Darwin was a gifted interpreter of God's books, trying to link God and nature, and he also showed his acceptance of current trends by being among the first to welcome, and use, the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. When the question of unfermented communion wine arose, Clarke seconded a motion proposing its use; he did not agree with it, but thought the question should be fully and fairly dealt with. The motion failed.[22]

In 1885 Clarke published a sermon, on Preaching the Gospel, with a letter to Tasmanian Congregational churches. In this he said that Christianity was in danger both of being narrowed to a shibboleth of words, or being debased through animal sensationalism. 'Gospel preaching is not done when it has beaten the sinner down to his knees; and to tell him when he gets up from his hysterics that then and there he is "saved" is to say <u>that</u> beyond which the folly of human audacity and presumption can hardly go...Let us teach with all the earnestness we can command that Christ's Gospel has not parted company with intelligence.'[23]

Another sermon published this year, 'Inspiration not the ground of our faith,' stressed that the Bible was not infallible, there were human elements in it, and Christians must study the facts and then infer the theory, not vice versa.[24] An 1888 lecture on the popular book 'Robert Elsmere' refuted the book's theory that the

Gospel miracles were only imagination.[25] From all these writings, Clarke's views are clear: Christianity should be a rational religion, not to be confused with the mysteries of ritual or the irrationalities of the extreme evangelicals.

The occasional publication and the affairs of the Davey Street church (by now running smoothly and successfully) left Clarke with some free time, and he had many other interests. These ranged from the occasional speech to societies such as that for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (in which he deplored scientific experiments on living animals)[26] to his interest, tied in with his general aim of promoting education, in encouraging Hobart's cultural and intellectual life. In 1882 he addressed the Young Men's Christian Association, on the topical question of 'Alexandria and the Suez Canal',[27] and he was President of the Hobart Parliamentary Debating and Literary Association (with J.B. Walker vice-president), and of the Davey Street Literary Association. This provided Lectures, Essays, Debates, Readings, and Recitations for the intellectual and moral improvement of members.[28]

By now the group around Clarke had consolidated into a large, stable number of families, mostly united by membership of the Davey Street church, and all by admiration of Clarke: though Clarke, with his natural reticence, was in no sense a Leader. An offshoot of the group was the Seven Rovers, a changing band of men who took their annual holiday in a trip on a fishing boat, camping on shore every night. They called themselves the Rovers as they roved from camp to camp as wind and

weather permitted.

Clarke (said Charles Walch)[29] was the premier Rover, and the idea had begun in 1859, when he had had to take a service in the new church at Franklin. He decided to go by boat and take two weeks, and was accompanied by Tom Whitesides, Fred Randall and Charles Walch. The trip was a great success, largely due to Clarke's abilities as a bushman, learnt in New Zealand. He took the Franklin service in the Rovers' rig of blue shirt and leather belt, and 'in this unconventional garb conducted the service and preached the sermon, in the plain wooden building, crowded with a reverent and attentive congregation.'[30]

After this the trips were yearly, and covered every bay and fishing ground from Bruni Island to the Schouten Islands. Walch felt they were the most enjoyable and invigorating holiday that could possibly be conceived, because of their entire abandon. All these responsible and hard working men could be boys again, and knowing and entirely trusting each other could thoroughly unbend in unrestrained play of their whole nature without any fear of being misunderstood. The best part was the camp life ashore, culminating each night in a gathering round the fire, singing, yarning or reading novels aloud, and ending with a Bible reading and the nightly prayer.

Forty trips were made between 1859 and 1905, when Walch, aged 70, decided he was too old to continue. He considered that these trips gave profound refreshment of soul and spirit: the fresh air and sunlight, mountains and ocean, tramping and sea-bathing, resulted in quickened physical vitality.[31]

The Rovers came from various backgrounds. John Mitchell came from a Hobart commercial family, and was a lawyer, supporting many charities.[32] James and George Salier, enthusiastic Congregationalists, ran a soft goods shop and a whaling fleet, and were also philanthropists.[33] Thomas Whitesides, born in Hobart, carried on his father's furniture business, supported charities, was a Deacon in the Davey Street church, and was also a well-known cricketer, making the then highest score against the English in 1862.[34] Philip Oakley Fysh, a businessman, entered parliament and was Premier from 1887 to 1892, advocating many liberal causes.[35]

Robert Mackenzie Johnston, an ex-navvy in Scotland, worked his way through a university course and became Registrar-General and Government Statistician in Tasmania: he was offered more prestigious positions, but like Clarke preferred to remain in the island. Unlike the other Rovers he was an atheist.[36]

Charles Walch, a pillar of the Davey Street church, had many local charitable interests, wrote excrutiating poetry but was highly esteemed as a worthy citizen. He and his brother James owned Walch's flourishing bookshop, and were among the Clarkes' closest friends.[37]

W.R. Giblin, a lawyer, was an excellent Sunday School teacher, and worked devotedly in the Berea Mission. He entered parliament, and was premier in 1878 and from 1879 to 1884. Until his term, Tasmanian politics had been in chaos - as described by Clarke in 1879 - with little principle involved and frequent changes of government. Giblin ran a stable, long-lasting ministry, reorganised finances and showed that a democratic system

could provide sound government. Greatly admired, he won affection and esteem from all, and his death in 1887 was widely mourned. Clarke preached the funeral sermon to a densely packed church: however it was terribly hot, and Walker found the sermon disappointing, with a want of unity.[38]

Walker himself was an occasional Rover, going on trips in the 70's and 80's. A letter to his mother from Camp in 1889 describes a cheerful group: 'we are all well and flourishing with appetites that astonish ourselves,' and despite constant rain, 'we were as snug and comfortable as possible.'[39]

Other members of Clarke's circle included Facy, a keen advocate of temperance, and the commercial Crosbys; all members of the Davey Street church: legal Watchorns, and the Dobsons, three brothers of whom J.B. Walker had a poor opinion (Lambert Dobson in particular rivalled Charles Walch as a comic figure) but who were generally respected and from an old Tasmanian family.

All these people had some things in common. Noticeable is their integrity and uprightness, and the high esteem in which they were held by the community generally, both for these qualities and for their philanthropy and active work in a wide range of community activities. Most, but not all, were churchgoers, and most Congregationalists; most were in business, though several were lawyers. Their education and social backgrounds varied, from tradesmen's families to those a little higher in the social scale, like the ex-army Walches, though all were thoroughly respectable: none, however, aspired to great social heights, and though they might attend an occas-

ional function at Government House they were not part of the highest social group. They did not wish to be, seeing themselves as engaged in more rational, useful and intelligent pursuits than those which busied socialites. (For Martha Clarke visits to Government House were an obligation to be avoided if possible. '[Papa] has to go to Govt House tomorrow afternoon,' she wrote to her daughter Grace. 'We are asked to four At Homes and must go to some.' Finally they did go to Government House; they 'tried to get out of dinner but had to accept lunch.')[40] Noticeable also are those areas in which the Clarke group had few connections: the landed gentry, the public service, the social leaders of the town.

Their views were cohesive, largely because they were all strongly influenced by Clarke. An ideal view of democracy, but a limit in Government activities - no interference with religion. A similar opinion to Henry Hopkins on charity: that the poor should be offered opportunities to better themselves (this being seen as one of the rationales of the colony) but that no help should be given which sapped their independence. Loyalty to the Empire; a fervent pride in Tasmania and its future; a belief in the necessity for Federation (except for R.M. Johnston, a keen opponent of the idea); a belief in progress and its benefits; and to all questions the necessity of a response based on intellectual reasoning and not emotion. Education was highly valued - note that several of these men had come from humble backgrounds and were only enabled to hold their present positions by their education - as was straightforwardness, lack of humbug, and a general tolerant and kindly

attitude to fellow-men. Not all the group would have held all these views, but even someone like J.B. Walker, prone to making rather unkind comments, worked hard to help others in areas such as the Hobart Working Men's Club and the Sunday School. His tolerance was more towards mankind in the mass than individuals, but many of the group managed to combine both.

With two Premiers among the group, Clarke's influence was strong in politics, in an indirect but nonetheless important way. Through Giblin and Fysh, Clarke's views may be said to have assisted in establishing a better parliamentary tradition and sounder politics which, in contrast to the earlier chaotic years, led to a stable democracy and reasonable rule for many decades.

Another place where ideas were exchanged and issues discussed was at the regular Saturday night symposiums, held at Clarke's house. Informal gatherings given to discussion, the occasional reading of a paper, and any interesting diversion like thought reading or a particularly exciting piece of gossip, they usually numbered a dozen or so guests, including Walches, Walkers, Giblins, R.M. Johnston, and many others. The first recorded Sym, as they were called, was in 1880, the last in the 1890's. The presence of many Clarke daughters was usually enough to keep them lively, and comments that Syms were 'quiet', or a 'funny little Sym', are clearly of unusual evenings.[41]

The Clarke girls played a large part in the Syms. One evening Minnie Clarke 'gave them a free version, largely sprinkled with slang, of the story of a Greek play - I forget which - which she had been reading in the

original.' Minnie also read a paper on John Bunyan.[42]

The lawyer and politician A.I. Clark - no relation also kept open house on Saturday evenings: R.M. Johnston and J.B. Walker both went at least once, but nothing else is known about these evenings. Walker continued to go to the Clarkes' at least once a fortnight, and enjoyed most Syms immensely. Through these Syms the Clarke views influenced those present and so the Syms, like the Davey Street church, welded an assortment of people into a vaguely cohesive group, who in turn had a great deal of influence in society generally, through the responsible positions some of them held.

Despite his success in his ministry, Clarke would merely have been one among several outstanding clergymen had it not been for his real interest in these years: in the establishment of a University in Tasmania.

CHAPTER 14

THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

After the flurry of interest in a university in the heady days of the fifties, when Tasmania was starting out on the road to nationhood, little had happened. The expansive fifties had given way to the more sombre sixties and seventies, when money was short and enthusiasm for a university scanty. After Clarke's brief period of membership in 1859-61, the Council of Education was busy organising its three sets of examinations - one for the Tasmanian Scholarships for overseas study, one for the degree of Associate of Arts for scholars finishing secondary school, and one for two Exhibitions to 'superior' schools for younger scholars. It also had occasionally to rebut demands that it be abolished. However, by the late 1870's it had gained a considerable amount of prestige: its system ran well and results were of a steadily increasing standard.[1] In 1875 the president, Archdeacon Davenport, made a vigorous attempt to set up an examining university, his claim being that the Tasmanian Scholarship examination was of a higher standard than a Bachelor of Arts degree at Oxford, Cambridge or Melbourne, thus all who passed it should be awarded a degree. The number of Tasmanian scholars who did not return to Tasmania was pointed out: if a Tasmanian university were established, the scholars and the money spent on them would remain at home. The attempt failed.[2]

When Clarke returned from England he was elected to the Council at the first opportunity, in June 1878,[3] and

the following year he was elected President, a position he held for two years.[4] He was convinced of the need for an examining university, that is, a university which would not give lectures, and thus have to pay lecturers, but which would hold examinations, so those who had studied elsewhere could sit for the exams and gain a degree. This was essentially what the Council was doing, with the examinations for the Tasmanian Scholarships. During Clarke's presidency of the Council, a committee, including himself, considered the desirability of applying to Parliament to amend the Act. Giblin, then Attorney-General, presented to Parliament a bill recommending the establishment of an examining university which could confer degrees: this would cost no more than the present scheme, yet confer the desired status on students. Endowments were prophesied, and students escaping from the warmer parts of Australia promised.[5] The Bill bore the unmistakable hand of George Clarke, and was accompanied by a memorandum, also largely his work.[6] He later described the memo as 'very carefully prepared';[7] in it he stressed the need for Tasmania to change its education system so that it was nearer the recognised situation. The Associate of Arts degree should be converted to Matriculation, and the Tasmanian Scholarship to degree examinations, for under the present system only two boys could win such scholarships, and the rest were seen to have failed. This discouraged scholarship and was most unfair. Now, with the colony prosperous due to the mining boom, it could afford to establish a University, which Clarke estimated would cost only £400 a year more than the present scheme.

However, the memorandum was not read in Parliament and never seen outside at all, while the bill, though carefully titled A Bill to Confer Additional Powers on the Council of Education (with no mention of a university) was opposed as being too ambitious, premature, and likely to expose the colony to ridicule, as it could not possibly achieve a worthwhile standard: moreover its degree was seen as being worthless outside Tasmania. Dobson's speech in favour, in which he said that 'it would not do much harm' was hardly inspiring: Giblin reiterated Davenport's assertions, and refuted criticism of the Council. 'The Hon. Speaker was a member of the Council of Education, and there were few people in the colony who had taken a more lively interest in education than he had done. (Hear, hear.) Then there was the Rev. George Clarke, who did not place any initials after his name, and who was a brilliant speaker, and one of the most able writers in the colony. (Hear, hear)'.[7] This strange argument seems to be against the need for a university rather than for it, and the bill was lost, 19 votes to 6. The whole affair was not futile, however, as it brought the question of a university into people's minds.

Clarke's term as President of the Council was notable in that the number of Exhibitions was increased from two to five, and they were opened to girls as well as boys, both liberal measures typical of him.[8] Walker considered that as President Clarke showed practical ability and strong common sense, qualities in him generally hidden. However, Clarke was disappointed at the failure of the university scheme, and wrote that he

hoped to stop being President, 'which will relieve me of a good deal of bother and responsibility.'[9]

In 1884 the Council decided to re-introduce the University Bill: Clarke said he could not see what difficulties there were in the way of beginning the university at once. No-one outside Tasmania knew the value of the Associate of Arts degree or the Tasmanian Scholarship: under the university system a young man leaving the colony would be able to show the exact value of his attainments. Clarke was a member of a committee to frame the bill, and a similar one to that of 1882 was presented to Parliament, but again it failed.[10]

For the rest of the decade the dispirited Council contented itself with reminding Parliament of the need for a university in each of its annual reports. In 1889, however, the Rev. James Scott, a Presbyterian, was elected a member. Scott wanted a teaching university, and set about trying to get one established. He proposed this to the Council, and wrote a document describing the desired university, which he circulated among many interested parties. A booklet of letters concerning a university was produced: Clarke and others were very much in favour of an examining university only.[11] Prophetically, Clarke said that there was no preparation in public opinion for a teaching university, nor any current of feeling in its favour: no promise of endowments, nor any financial provision beyond 'the chance of a precarious yearly vote in supply.' Good teachers would be costly and students few, while outside examinations would still have to be held, 'for it would never do to let the Teaching Staff appraise the results of their own work.'

An examining university would be cheaper and simpler.[11]

Information was collected from the universities of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, and the Council had several stormy meetings over whether the proposed university should be teaching or examining.[12] Scott said that a hundred students could be expected almost at once, while £600 a year would suffice for each chair in a teaching university: Clarke claimed that a total of £2,500 would be needed, while several members did not want to see the Tasmanian Scholarships disappear.[13] It is notable that in all these predictions, Clarke was far more accurate than Scott.

'Mr. Clarke is very much taken up with a scheme for a Tasmanian University,' wrote J.B. Walker. 'He is much exercised in mind to find from statistics that we are worse off in Education than any of the colonies, and that there are more children here in proportion who can't read than in any other part of Australia. Rev^{d} Scott wants to start a teaching University with professors. Most of us on the Council think this absurd.'[14]

Finally a bill was submitted to Parliament in October 1889, similar to the earlier ones but providing for an Interim University Council to act as an examining body and possibly develop as a teaching institution, appointing lecturers and affiliating with technical and agricultural colleges, when it was in a position to do so.[15] Scott was not satisfied, and was busy night and day visiting members of parliament and impressing his views on them, with the result that the House transformed the bill. 'I have had a nice time with the University Bill, which has been altered over and over again by the Comm-

ittee and the Council, necessitating my drawing new clauses, which took a lot of time and thought,' wrote J.B. Walker. 'The Government has taken up the thing warmly, and the Rag tonight had a most eulogistic article, so that there is a chance of its passing and our having a real live University - of course only an examining one at first. The idea is to put the Technical School and Agricultural College under the University Council, and the "News" suggests the farmers' or pastoral associations should elect some members, and I suppose the Trades and Labour Council some others - Fancy the resulting University Council!'[16]

Walker went to the debate - 'terrible drivel and chatter and confusion...I went at 5 o'clock and they talked till 12 - moving innumerable amendments and only carrying two clauses of the Bill. The ignorance displayed was wonderful, and the empty and ceaseless talk altogether extraordinary.' On 7th November, 'the ignorance of members as to what a University is being positively appalling - but they tell me it has no chance of going through the Council '[17] (i.e. the Legislative Council). Certainly the debate as reported in the Mercury was not of a high standard. There was opposition to the bill on the grounds that a University would be an expensive luxury for the rich, that the money could be better spent on increasing state school teachers' salaries, and that the Government was not called on to provide more than elementary education.[18] However, at length the Bill was passed, providing for a teaching university with £3,000 a year, rising to £4,000, to come into existence in January 1890.[19] Unfortunately

Walker's comments on this outcome are lost, but it was certainly due to Scott's efforts that a teaching university had so suddenly been created - in theory, at least.

Clarke, however, played a large part in the establishment of the university, especially in his work in preparing the way in the early 1880's. As well, the great esteem in which he was generally held meant that any scheme which he espoused was respectable in the public eye, and so his championing of the idea gave it a large measure of public acceptance (even though he disagreed with Scott about the university's form). The next task was to establish the university in practice.

The University of Tasmania came into being on the first of January 1890, 'for the promotion of useful knowledge, to hold forth to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects resident in Tasmania without any distinction whatever, encouragement for pursuing a regular and liberal course of education.'[20] It was governed by a Council, half of whose members were elected by Parliament and half by the Senate, a body made up of graduates, eventually of the University of Tasmania, but at first of any university. The Council of Education, including Dobson, Walker, Scott and Clarke, met early in 1890 and adapted its old regulations to its approaching title of University Council. A Committee, including Clarke and Walker, was appointed to establish rules and regulations, and they were also on another committee to prepare a scheme of examinations for 1891.[21] There were factions within the Council: 'Some of us met beforehand and agreed what to do, and appointed the Committee we had fixed on -

our principal object being to keep out the Rev. James Scott, in which were were quite successful,' wrote Walker. 'I foresee lots of trouble in getting the University started on proper lines.'[22]

In May it was proposed to elect a Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, and a squabble broke out chiefly between Walker and Scott: Clarke took no part. Finally Sir Lambert Dobson was chosen Chancellor and Clarke elected Vice-Chancellor unopposed.[23]

The Council was thus in the slightly ridiculous position of having as its two leading figures men who had opposed the establishment of a teaching university only the year before, but once the decision was made both apparently made every effort to ensure the University's success.

In June 1890 the old Council of Education formally merged into the new University Council at an impressive ceremony in the Town Hall. 'Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather,' as the Mercury put it,[24] there was a large attendance. The Council gathered outside, wrote Walker, 'and had a discussion whether they should wait to receive the Governor, but it was decided that it was not etiquette, or dignified, for the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and learned Council to troop after His Excellency like a flock of schoolboys, so we went up and took our seats on the Dais, amidst quite a flutter of sensation in the hall.'[25] The front seats were full of graduates, in all sorts of academic costumes, while Walker considered Clarke looked very well in his minister's gown: Sir Lambert, in silk gown, patent leather shoes and mortarboard with a gold tassel, was

clearly thought a little showy. After the Governor's arrival, music was played, prizes presented, and thirty-one Tasmanians, graduates of different universities, were individually admitted to the University Senate. The brilliant gowns impressed the audience ('mostly women, of course'); several graduates looked very much inclined to laugh, while Dr. Benjafield excited amusement. 'His fat little figure was clothed in a gown with a large hood, lined with blue and edged with rabbit fur...He came up with a very perky air; holding his head on one side, posturing and smiling.'[25] Nine Associates of Arts were then admitted, then the current Associates given their certificates: one candidate for the Senate came in late and had to be admitted in the middle, which so upset things that the young Associates' prizes were forgotten, much to their disappointment. Clearly Tasmanians were not accustomed to such pomp: however, while almost everyone else made mistakes Clarke's natural dignity meant that he never appeared ridiculous. This was not the case with Sir Lambert Dobson, who caused a sensation when he pointed out in his speech that University Senates were usually only composed of men with degrees, but here, owing to a shortage of such gentlemen, they were obliged to accept Associates of Arts. This statement brought considerable criticism, especially as Dobson himself had no degree. It was suggested that he thought himself Chancellor by divine right.[26]

With occasional sidetracks into subject such as finding a larger room for meetings, the main concern for 1890 was administrative detail.[27] Walker was not sanguine about the whole project: 'it has got too much into

the hands of the politicians and people who have ends of their own to serve. But we must try to do what we can to keep it on sensible lines.' He commented sarcastically on 'the founding of what is destined to be the chief seat (or centre) of sweetness and light in the Southern Hemisphere.'[28] He was rather appalled by the lack of knowledge in some quarters: the warden of the Senate was 'about as incapable a one as could be found,' while 'I am trying to educate the ignorant members of the Council especially Mr. Justice Dodds, by lending them books on universities.'[29] Walker clearly thought he was the only member doing any work, though he reported several visits to Clarke on University business, sometimes before Council meetings to plan strategy.[30]

Clarke was concerned with various matters, one being whether the Tasmanian Scholarships should be continued in 1891; he urged that they should, to keep faith with those studying for them. He also pointed out with evident pleasure that girls could enter for Exhibitions and Degree course if they chose.[31] (In fact there was never any question but that they could attend the university, even though in other parts of the world they were still struggling for this privilege. Australia generally gave freedom earlier and more readily to women than many other countries - Canada, for example - while in Tasmania the University was keen to attract students and could not afford to refuse any. Given that its early years were so difficult, without women students it may well have foundered altogether, as numbers would have been so low.)

In September, after Parliament and the Senate had

elected their Council members (Clarke was elected by the Senate, Walker by Parliament) Clarke had the difficult task of chairing a meeting where he was to suggest moves counter to those moved by 'our cantankerous friend Scott,'[32] who thought that the new body should reconsider all its statutes and positions. Clarke felt that there was no need for these actions; Scott could press his point, of course, but speaking for himself Clarke thought they could not do better than retain things as they were, these having been decided on after a good deal of due thought in the first place. In the matter of the Chancellor, 'to put the matter on very low ground he thought it would not look very nice if, after having had the services of His Honour in this position for a few months, one which he had so well and worthily filled, they were now to look elsewhere,' and he moved Dobson's election. Scott objected, but Dobson remained Chancellor. Dodds now proposed Clarke as Vice-Chancellor; surprisingly, the motion was seconded by Scott, and Clarke was elected.[33] Later in the year he reported on the work of the Finance Committee, of which he was a member. Although he did not enter into the rather petty disagreements with which the Council was wont to pass a considerable part of its time, he knew exactly what was happening, worked on three committees and attended 17 of the Council's 22 meetings, and 18 out of 19 in 1891.[34]

In this year the Council changed the school examination system, abolishing the Associate of Arts degree and the Tasmanian Scholarship exams and establishing a Junior Public, with five Junior Exhibitions awarded for the later years of secondary education, and the Senior

Public, with two Exhibitions tenable at the University. As Clarke wished, the education system was now in line with that of most British countries.[35] Much of the year was taken up with attempts to gain for the University money left in the Leake Bequest for the study of astronomy; however, nothing ever came of this. As Dobson was frequently absent from meetings Clarke often took the chair, and proved himself good at ending what the Mercury euphemistically called 'conversational discussions' with a remark such as that 'he was sure the committee would look to all points and urged their claim in a proper manner and at the proper time.'[36] Vexed questions included the payment of travelling expenses to meetings for those members who lived in the country, whether Arithmetic should be compulsory in the Senior Public (Clarke had no strong feelings on the subject),[37] and what subjects were to be taught at the University.

In June Clarke delivered the address at the University's Annual Meeting, a difficult task as after eighteen months the public were demanding results and there were few concrete ones to give. Clarke told his audience that he had no intention of inflicting on them 'any "viewy" speculations projected from the depths of one's inner consciousness' but soberly compared the new University with others; how Sydney, for example, had risen from humble beginnings to great eminence. They must accept criticism and discouragement, and assumptions that the Council was supinely slow, 'that we have neither clear purpose nor definite policy, that we have put to sea in a wicker cradle and are just paddling into cir-

cumambient space.' In fact the Council was not standing still. It was constrained as such a high percentage of its funds had to be spent on Tasmanian Scholarships for some years; he urged everyone to have patience. 'I am as anxious as anyone to push on the educational interests of the colony earnestly, prudently, patiently, and with as little friction as circumstances will allow... There is no reason in the nature of things why Tasmania should not in time take a high and honourable place in the world of learning by the side of her bigger sisters. Indeed, we enjoy climactic advantages which, if we get Federation, will one day tell heavily in our favour.'[38] The Mercury applauded Clarke's speech, though it did not feel such a vindication was completely necessary, as no-one was saying that the institution was a failure. It noted a 'certain kind of condescension in people from the bigger colonies and from Europe who dealt with things Tasmania,' and told them that their experience was useless unless adapted to the Tasmanian environment. Although we might look somewhat paltry to the 'dash and go which are said to prevail across the Straits,' we should advance manfully and persistently toward our goal. The Mercury excused the few mistakes which had been made - unavailable books prescribed, impossible tasks set - and in general congratulated all concerned on the progress made.[39]

Walker described this meeting, 'a feature of which was the Rev. Georges defence of the Tasmanian University against actual and possible attack, and was very wise and practical. Wretched day, rainy and muddy, but Hall full.'[40]

The rest of the year was largely spent in more discussion of the subjects to be taught, and Clarke was on a committee to establish lectureships. A Jewish father asked that his son have no exams on Saturday; the Council tried to arrange this. Later in the year interest in Council affairs waned, with two meetings where no quorum was reached.[41]

By 1892 preparations for the University were well underway.[42] With a balance of £1,000 from 1890, £500 from 1891, and £1,500 from 1892 the University could afford to pay lecturers' salaries, and Clarke was on committees to appoint them. From 43 applicants three were chosen in Arts, Classics and English Literature; Law and Modern History; and Maths and Physics. Clarke was also on committees to consider federating Australian universities and to try to incorporate astronomy; both achieved little. However, the University was successful in gaining the old High School buildings. Walker wrote testily that Scott was claiming credit for this, but it was really due to Clarke, and he, Walker, was going to see to it that the true facts were known.[43] Arrangements were made for a library, while in December the first examinations for the B.A. degree were held. Of six candidates, four passed and two failed in compulsory Mathematics, but passed the following year. These students were external, so Clarke's idea of an examining university had a brief year of existence. It did have its disadvantages. With not even an office to work in, Clarke used to complete his work at home, take it to town, meet the Registrar at the Post Office corner and hand over any necessary papers.[44]

Generally in meetings Clarke was mild, putting forward his point of view but happy to give way to the majority. His sensible and reasonable, moderate views were usually agreed to, however. Walker and Scott were still arguing occasionally; in 1892 Walker wrote, 'Scott and I had a hot dispute. Afterwards went to tea with him.'[45]

1893 saw the University really get started. The buildings were ready for the first day of term, when the three lecturers began work. They gave a total of 40 lectures per week, and by third term had nineteen students. They also took it in turns to travel to Launceston, one lecturer each week: here they gave an Extension Lecture, and a lecture to university students, of which there were nine. This was an effort, not wholly successful, to still hostility in the north to what seemed like a southern university. Clarke had pressed for extension lectures in Launceston, and had several petty problems to smooth over.[46]

A far greater problem was finance, for by now Tasmania was suffering a severe economic depression, and criticism of the University as an expensive luxury, never long suppressed, burst forth anew. The University Council voluntarily approached the Government with an offer to give up one quarter of their income, a move aimed (probably by Clarke) to forestall criticism.[47] Some Members of Parliament were determined to abolish the University, that 'costly toy'; Walker published a paper pointing out that University expenditure was little more than that of the old Council of Education, and in any case was put to better use, with the money kept in Tasmania and more students educated. Another

pamphlet, 'Can We Afford It?' stressed the necessity of education, especially in a democratic and modern system like that of Tasmania.[48] The University was not abolished, but opposition, particularly in the north, was strong.

1894, still a depression year, saw a further reduced income, though expenditure on the Tasmanian Scholarships began to tail off as the remaining scholars finished their studies. A Board of Studies and the different Faculties were established, and also the first prize (the Sir Richard Dry Exhibition); an Instructor of Mathematics was appointed, a Tennis Club set up, and at the annual examinations twenty candidates (including three women) sat, sixteen passed, and the first degree, a B.A. was gained by Samuel Picken of Launceston. Clarke pressed for the publication of the results at once. He was extremely busy this year, and of the seven committees appointed he sat on four.[49]

Walker wrote a letter to the Mercury in March 1894, stressing the usefulness of the University. The lectures were open to all, and available to teachers, professional people, and those desirous of self-improvement; the fees were small, and the northern and country areas catered for.[50] This was not enough, and cries of 'costly toy' were again hurled at the University, while the House of Assembly set the University's allowance at £1,500, a ridiculous amount which would have meant the end of the University as a teaching institution, for the three lecturers alone earnt that sum. Walker and others threw themselves into the fray with letters and articles: Walker proved the Treasurer's figures wrong, with some

enjoyment. The Upper House raised the vote to the amount the University Council asked for, £2,500: with careful management the University could just get by, though this meant cut of 10% in lecturers' salaries (as a recompense their title was changed to Professor), while an examiner who declined his fees was thanked profusely. Progress was made academically, with a higher number of students (including 16 at Launceston), 5 B.A.s and one Ll.B. awarded, and the first Honours degree, in Arts.[51]

1896 was a year of strict economy, though also the first when no payments were necessary for the Tasmanian Scholarships. Extension lectures were restricted to Hobart, two examiners refused their pay and sets of old exam papers were sold. However, the coretaker's pay was raised to a reasonable level, while there were 28 candidates for the exams, and the first womon gained her degree. To widen the scope of the University and attract more students, music and medicine were considered as subjects, while Clarke suggested that non-matriculated students should be allowed to participate and be awarded certificates. This did not eventuate.[52]

In 1897 Clarke remarked that the last two or three years had been very trying,[53] and it must have been difficult managing a university on only 60% of its expected income. However, there was some expansion with fifty lectures a week (Modern Languages was added, though the Instructor worked for an honorarium of a mere three guineas), four B.A.s awarded (two to women), one B.Sc. and three Ll.B.s. At Clarke's suggestion salaries were paid at the full rate and the registrar's salary was also

raised,[54] but economies were urged: a late fee, no refunds, and a special fee for candidates to sit the exams in Launceston. Fortunately for north-south relations this was not agreed to by Council. There was a good deal of repetitive discussion about Academic Dress, while Clarke wanted a seal and a Motto.[55]

By 1898 the income had risen slightly to £2,900, while the only other considerable source of income, fees, brought the total up to £3,338. In May the Chancellor, Dobson, died, and Clarke was unanimously elected in his place. He then pushed for the election of Walker as Vice Chancellor, and despite the not unexpected opposition of Scott, he was elected. Walker refused at first as he thought the Vice Chancellor ought to be a graduate, but 'one can't help being pleased at being asked,'[56] and he gave in quite readily.

Dobson had played little part in the Council's deliberations, but as Chancellor Clarke continued to be very much involved. On Commemmoration Day Walker thought Clarke 'looked gorgeous, wearing a black silk robe and a mortarboard with a gold tassel, and gave a fine address.'[57] In handing out degrees to women, he explained that no distinction of sex was made in university examinations (applause); the three B.A.s were all women, as was the one B.Sc., and only in Law were there men graduates. In his address Clarke praised Dobson, his friend of thirty years, and said he would continue with his ideal of quality not quantity. There were some failures among the University students, but this was not altogether bad, and he hoped parents and friends would not upbraid unsuccessful candidates. 'I have been

knocked down a good many times in seventy years, but have managed to get on my feet again, not much the worse.' The first M.A. was praised, and Clarke hoped that he and those who came after him would wear the honour worthily, and show that the stamp of the University of Tasmania had the right to pass current all through the Empire as an honest guarantee of scholastic attainment.

Clarke stressed the need for quality. 'Whatever our difficulties, Tasmania must be educated. If not, we must bear the shame of seeing her sons and daughters slink far behind their Australian co-evals. We want to rear a breed of men and women who can hold up their heads in any learned society in the world. We want to train and qualify a fair proportion of our own native-born men, fitted to take a leading part in all our affairs,' unlike, say, the Boers, a dreadful warning of the result of a lack of education. It would be terrible to regress to the 'chaos, mostly of twaddle, that passed for teaching before the Council of Education began its work.' It was difficult, in the 'agony of our financial troubles,' but standards must not be allowed to fall by a hairsbreadth. He pointed out the need for a permanent money supply instead of a shaky annual vote.[58]

Walker, admittedly not an impartial observer, was greatly impressed by Clarke's speech and by his wonderful mental vigour at 76. 'I doubt if there is a man in Tasmania who can rival him ot an address of this sort,' he wrote.[59]

The Cyclopedia of Tasmania, describing the University at this time, praised its handsome building and

marvellous site, overlooking the river, and gave the degrees so far awarded as one M.A., 16 B.A.s, 10 Ll.B.s, and 3 B.Sc.s. Seven of the degrees, nearly 25%, had been awarded to women.[60]

By this time there was great interest in the possibility of a course in mining, and a deputation from the Council, including Clarke, suggested to the Premier that if Parliament would provide the original sum promised, £4,000, this would be included. Parliament agreed, so metallurgy was included as a university subject, to be shared with the Technical College, and a scheme for a mining course approved. 1899 saw Clarke busy as Chancellor. There was a considerable demand for his soothing presence at meetings, calming down petty disputes. Doubtless he and Walker had envisaged an enjoyable time running the University together, but to Clarke's great sorrow Walker died in November. At his Commemmoration Day speech Clarke praised Walker's broad views, sound judgment, disinterested motives, quiet zeal, and above all hard work. Again he stressed that the University's standards must be kept up, unlike those of a neighbouring colony (unspecified). There was some popular mistrust of universities, natural enough in colonies where the first task was to subdue the elements, but the old drills in Latin and Mathematics were valuable in the habits of mind they created, and he thought education was not complete without a classical language. Australia, he said, was too materialistic and needed universities.[61]

By 1900 lectures were up to 75 a week, with forty candidates for degree exams. Of the ten students who

graduated, half were women. Stephens was elected Vice-Chancellor, but resigned within a year, pleading pressure of work: A.I. Clark was eventually elected in June 1901. During this period, Clarke was extremely busy, and did much of the Vice-Chancellor's work.[62]

Among other points he urged that the Council should abstain from publicly taking part in any movement associated with anything of a political tendency; that the front of the University should be illuminated for the Royal Visit, and a Latin address of welcome read; while he was part of a delegation who waited on the Government about Land Endowment, though with no success. In 1899 a University Union was formed to encourage social intercourse and interest in university sports, with Clarke as President. In 1902 a Women's University Union was established, with Martha Clarke as Patron; this was the only public part she played in university life.[63]

In 1902 the University was again under attack as being too expensive. Clarke's defence was that a good University had been established at a comparatively low cost and was doing vital work.[64] The attack faded, and the University's grant continued to be £4,000 a year. Clarke was to be very active in University affairs until 1904. In these first fourteen years of the University he played the dominant role, for the other men who held leading offices either did little, or held office for too short a time to make much impact.

In the early 1900's Clarke was attending most of the Council's meetings, in 1903 only 11 out of 19, in 1904 6 and from then on only one or two a year.[65] In May 1907, aged 85, he resigned as Chancellor.[66] By now the

University was providing 84 lectures a week in four faculties, and teaching 101 students: since 1900 it had been receiving £4,000 a year and had gained a Rhodes Scholarship, a prestigious symbol of international acceptance. It had been through many crises in its seventeen years, but by now it was well established and moderately successful. Maurice French, the author of 'The Prehistory of the University of Tasmania,' comments that in its first years the University merely existed,[67] but considering the problems and opposition of the 1890's and early 1900's, it is remarkable that it continued to exist at all. Much of the credit for this must go to Clarke, who steered it through crisis after crisis in his wise and sensible style, always willing to compromise and see other points of view. His moderate, reasonable leadership was the major component in ensuring the success and expansion which the University achieved through these difficult years. Had impulsive, argumentative men like Scott or even Walker, or men of little ability like Dobson, been in real charge during these years the University might well have failed altogether. To Clarke must go the credit for both helping to establish the University in the first place, then in guiding it through its early years and establishing it as a successful institution, while his continual emphasis on a high standard meant that, though its early years might have been made more difficult, it had gained acceptance as a university by the time he retired.

CHAPTER 15

CLARKE INFLUENCE

During the eighties several of the Clarke daughters became involved in activities which spread Clarke ideas further among the community. Poppy Clarke worked at a night school, founded by the Anglican bishop's daughter to help young working-class men, many of whom were illiterate. When she left the colony in 1884, Poppy Clarke took over the school and remained at its head until it closed twenty years later.[1]

She was an excellent teacher with a quietly authoritative manner which commanded instant obedience, and the school was very successful. It ran twice weekly, for six months, with about eighty pupils at each session. Poppy and her unpaid assistant teachers (including other Clarkes and Walkers) taught the three R's, but the main aim, said Poppy, was to give the boys 'a central meeting place for happy comradeship, while at the same time giving opportunity for self-advancement. The boys who came to the school were passing through a difficult time in their lives. They needed a steadying and kindly influence, and we did our best to keep them straight.' The boys were divided into small classes, by age rather than by grade, and the school cost £15 a year to run. It was free, but once a year there was a collection among the boys and others supporters. Poppy was devoted to the school and to her boys.[1]

In the 1890's she built new rooms for the school, at her own expense, and included a clubroom and a gymnasium. She later built a small house for the boys'

relaxation in the Summerhome garden, while several of the boys came to Summerhome for Sunday School. Many people commented on Poppy's success with boys often dismissed by others as unruly larrikins.[2] There are no records of the Night School extant, but in the twenty or so years of its existence it must have taught about a thousand boys. Poppy Clarke was in no way trying to change the existing system, but was aiming to give these boys a better chance within it. It was a generous and sustained attempt, involving considerable time, money and effort, to assist a group of people whom few others thought worthy of help, and shows discernment on Poppy's part that she could realise the boys' needs. In the early 1900's State High Schools were established catering for this group, and the night school was no longer necessary. It closed at a vague date only given as 'in the early years of this century.'[3]

George Clarke was widely respected throughout the community, with J.B. Walker as one of his most fervent admirers. 'Mr. Clarke himself surprises me by the vigour and grasp of his mind which seems to ripen and widen with age,' he wrote. 'Never has he preached better or more original sermons than now; he seems to have shaken himself free from many trammels that used to hamper him; although still there are strangely incongruous veins of orthodoxy which crop to the surface at times. In spite of his dreamy absent way he has also a large amount of practical ability and strong common sense.'[4] This was not inevitably respected, for his daughter Minnie described the arrival of an anonymous letter, criticising Clarke for encouraging wordly interests in

his congregation. Minnie excused the writer as needing to relieve her conscience, adding that Clarke had received a good many such letters in his time.[5]

His own letters show his gentleness and tolerance. When a Quaker minister visited Hobart, Clarke lent him the Davey Street church, and was pleased to do so - 'it is a chance of showing them courtesy and respect.'[6] Though he was at the theoretical head of his family he was in no sense an authoritarian father, while Martha Clarke dealt with family finances and coped with crises. A capable and strong-minded woman, she ran her own life in the way she wished, and gave her daughters considerable freedom: unlike the stereotyped Victorian mother she did not push them into marriage. 'You know dear,' she wrote to Grace, 'I am not a matrimonialist by profession.'[7] Though involved in activities seen as typical for a woman in her position - domestic interests and charitable and religious work - she did not let these submerge her identity and encouraged her daughters to do the same. While none outwardly rebelled against society's vision of a woman's place, they quietly pursued their lives as they wished. This action can be seen as setting the scene for the changes in women's position which took place in the twentiety century, while it also shows the flexibility of Tasmanian society: the Clarkes were wholly acceptable and Martha Clarke esteemed as a model minister's wife.

The family received a financial blow in 1891, when the Bank of Van Diemen's Land failed, and they lost the bulk of their money. Fortunately a good deal of their wealth was in property, but it was a heavy blow, and they

had to live much more economically than in the past.[8]

The Clarke children had varied careers. Alice remained at home, engaged with domestic duties; Poppy had her educational interests; Grace married Arthur Walch, son of James Walch; George Edward settled on a farm and also held several local government positions; Henry studied art in Italy, returning to Tasmania with no career; Lily apparently did little; and Arthur became a doctor.

Minnie obviously felt she must do something with her life and began training as a nurse, to her family's consternation: however, she caught typhoid and was forced to withdraw from the course.[9] A more successful attempt at a career was made by Poppy when in 1892 she and Sarah Walker began a school. Sarah had been a teacher at the Ladies' College, but was disgusted at the lack of tone and taste shown by a new principal, and persuaded Poppy to join her in starting a school. They announced the venture in January 1892, and after a busy three months finding a house, furnishing it, and on Poppy's part, reading some history, they opened their school in April, with twelve pupils.[10] Numbers rose quickly, and the staff was augmented by additional teachers, including Minnie Clarke, who became an excellent and inspiring instructor. Despite the depression of the 1890's the school, called the Girls' High School, did well: Sarah Walker emphasised tone, while the Clarkes took a great interest in the academic side, and the school soon had a respectable record and reputation.

In 1897 Sarah Walker became ill, and from then on

Poppy Clarke was in charge, with Minnie as second-in-command. By the end of the century the school had a hundred pupils, all girls except for a few boys in the lower grades. Academic subjects were stressed, and leant heavily towards the arts; classes were small, the teachers generally capable, so results were consistently good. Poppy Clarke had some advanced views on education. She instituted a system of class teachers, novel at the time, and imported Kindergarten, French and gymnastics teachers. Discipline was strict but punishment rare, with corporal punishment unheard-of: Poppy Clarke was an awe-inspiring figure and her presence quelled even the boldest. Ladylike behaviour was enforced, and Poppy only accepted girls she thought would fit in to the school, so that pupils mostly came from the professional and upper-middle classes. The school was undenominational, but Scripture was taught, and loyalty to the British Empire stressed. The school turned out cultivated, well-mannered girls with, it was hoped, enough academic training to take an interest in activities apart from the social and domestic pursuits soon to occupy so many of them; though several girls went on to the university.[11] It may seem anachronistic that two unmarried women who themselves had careers should run such a school, but this was the accepted form of education for girls. Following the Clarke tradition, Poppy and Minnie did little to change the status quo, but tried to establish the best possible institution within the accepted framework. This attitude is also seen in the Night School, and in many aspects of their father's career. Another characteristic is that the Clarkes were

not innovators, and this trait reached back to Henry Hopkins; though active in many areas, he rarely began any society or institution. While the family wished that all people could share in the benefits of Tasmanian society, they did not want any radical change, and it usually took other people to point out where even minor changes were needed.

Minnie Clarke, however, did seem to initiate one activity. She became interested in helping the blind, and even before Braille machines were available she and a group of assistants translated stories and poems into Braille, while she frequently read to the blind. She was awarded the M.B.E. for this work in 1942.[12]

From Clarke documents Hobart life is seen as comfortable and pleasant, if somewhat restricted. Although people travelled quite extensively - all the family visited New Zealand and mainland Australia[13] - their interests centred very much around Hobart's community, and its many social and (sometimes quasi-)intellectual activities.

Wider issues were occasionally discussed. Most people were in favour of Federation (except R.M. Johnston) and most felt strongly patriotic towards Tasmania: possible clashes of interest here are not mentioned. J.B. Walker told his sister not to let the haughty English or Germans laud it over the freeborn Tasmanian. 'As the Americans used to say, "This is going to be a big country - Yes, Sir!"'[14] (However, Tasmania's past was less valued: 'the doings of convicts and soldiers set down in the bush of a new country gets monotonous, even with blacks thrown in,' he wrote.)[15]

Apart from a debate on the topic in the early eighties, female suffrage and women's rights generally are rarely mentioned. Isa Walker wrote in 1897, 'just imagine Grace and I discussing women's rights'[16] as if this were unusual. The economic depression of the early 1890's was only referred to as it affected the number of pupils at the Girls' High School. Political principles are also notable by their absence. Mary Walker wrote from England that it seemed impossible not to come to socialism if you were affected by the sight of the tremendous wealth of the few and the horrible degradation of the many,[17] but it is impossible to tell how this was received in Hobart, where these sights were not so evident. Most people held the comfortable belief that the poor in Tasmania were much better off than their counterparts in England, while if any were in difficulties the charitable societies for which many of the Clarke circle worked, would help them; while there was still a feeling that those in trouble had not tried hard enough. In earlier years Clarke, Walker and their friends sympathised with working men's efforts to improve conditions, but by the 1890's they were disenchanted with the militants in the labour movement.[18]

Several activities brought Clarke renown in the 1890's. In 1892 Hobart was the venue for the conference of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. A number of papers were given by speakers from all over Australia, including J.B. Walker, and Clarke was requested to give the annual sermon to conference members. His title was 'From Man to Nature and from Man to God,' and he showed that the scientific advances of the last

fifty years were not incompatible with religious belief, but on the contrary could enhance it. His speech had two underlying assumptions: an acceptance of man as a part of nature, and a belief that 'the world is slowly getting better.' The sermon was later published.[19]

'Men of light and learning - of all creeds and no creed - from every part of Australia, were present on that memorable occasion in Davey-street Church, and the unanimous opinion was expressed that not another preacher in the Colonies could have handled his subject so well,' reported the Mercury.[20] However, Hobart would not have been Hobart had there not been a little scandal at the time, and Sarah Walker wrote that the Anglican Dean, complaining that the minister of an insignificant sect had been chosen, asked the Association to publish that the man of his choice would preach on the subject instead. The Association replied that his man could preach later, in the evening, and 'in beautiful contrast' Clarke cancelled his evening service so that the congregation were free to hear the rival speaker if they wished.[21]

Over the years Clarke had published a number of sermons in pamphlet form: nineteen in forty years.[22] How many copies of each were printed, and sales figures, are unknown, but this type of reading matter was popular at the time, so presumably Clarke's pamphlets reached quite a wide audience. In the 1890's he also wrote a book, Notes on Early Life in New Zealand. This described his life until he came to Van Diemen's Land in 1846, and was a gentle vindication of his policy of attempting to gain fair treatment for the Maoris. In the Preface Clarke states that the Notes were written for the inform-

ation of family and friends, and were not intended for publication. However, they were 'charged with historical element'[23] as an eye-witness account, and so he published them. Naturally they were printed by Walches. At first sight the recollections of an old man of events which took place fifty years before do not appear very valuable. However, at this time Dr. Hocken in New Zealand was collecting material on the country's history, and asked Clarke for his letters to his father, written in the 1840's.[24] Clarke sent them to him, but first used them as a basis for his book; many passages in the book are copied verbatim from the letters. Where Clarke does rely on memory he makes some geographical mistakes and other slips, for example in the section on his early childhood.

The book was published in 1903 and caused a stir of interest, while it has been referred to by most New Zealand historians working on this period. As in all his activities, Clarke tried to be objective and rational, even in his descriptions of the Wakefields.

Clarke's ministerial work continued, though in the 1890's an assistant did many of the routine tasks. Under Clarke the Davey Street church had high prestige, and for those of other denominations to go there was considered by them as quite a treat.[25]

By the 1890's Congregationalism had a name for cultured Christianity, and a strong social conscience and self-critical mood.[26] This atmosphere suited Clarke, though for him self-deprecation is more evident than self-criticism. The Australian Independent describes him in Gilbertian terms as a 'liberal conservative,'[27] with

a firm grasp on essentials but accepting the results of modern criticism. He was typical of the general Congregational attitude to labour: sympathy, but sympathy from above, without anything concrete being done for the working classes (no agencies of social service were established, for example). With the rest of the church Clarke was proud of its record in supporting liberal measures and individual liberty; responsible government, extension of the suffrage, educational reform; while the intellectual challenge provided by the church was also prized.

While Clarke fits in with most trends seen in the church as a whole, how far he initiated them or merely followed others is not clear. He did have great influence in Tasmania and was highly respected on the mainland, and it was remarked several times that had he left Tasmania or entered politics, his career might have reached any height; as it was, 'its value cannot be estimated by ordinary standards of success.'[28] With a lack of evidence to the contrary it is probable that he was a part of the mainstream of Congregational thinking rather than an initiator.

Although he spoke on questions of the day, his influence here was limited as there were few questions of any great moral moment in Tasmania during his ministry. He supported Federation; he preached tolerance in the Chiniquy affair; he urged general support for the working-man and a more responsible political attitude. Apart from this there was little for him to say. Clarke saw social injustice as less in Tasmania than in, say, England, though he rarely mentions social conditions, his interests being more theoretical and intellectual. It was left to

people like the Anglican Bishop Mercer to expose appalling working conditions in Hobart[29] (possibly Clarke's failure to speak of such uncomfortable topics explains some of his popularity). There were no racial problems - nineteenth century Tasmania was almost entirely racially homogeneous, and the aborigines had mainly disappeared before Clarke's time - few outstanding examples of intolerance, little known corruption. What Clarke did do was to preach a general tolerance, and a reasoned attitude to all questions rather than an emotional reaction.

How much notice was generally taken of this? Tasmania was a peaceful place during his ministry, and it may be that this was partly due to Clarke's influence, but influence is such a vague concept that it is almost impossible to assess. All that can be said is that his views were strongly held by many members of his congregation, and circle of friends, and through the positions they held in the professions, business, parliament and in social institutions, they in turn influenced society.

Clarke's sermons continued to impress J.B. Walker. 'Mr. Clarke is really a wonder,' he wrote, in an undated letter. 'It is quite safe to say that there is no-one in Tasmania who could do anything like them, and it is astonishing to find him getting fresher, at an age when men are generally getting worn out, and simply repeating themselves.'[30]

When the Australian colonies federated Clarke urged his congregation to work for the new Commonwealth. In 1901 he preached on 'Is the Federation of Churches possible or desirable?' No was the answer. Federation would mean centralisation, and the destruction of Congre-

gational ideals of autonomy. 'Let us hold firmly, but largely, to our principles, without bitterness, without arrogance, without uncharitableness, without the spirit of aggressive contentiousness.'[31]

In 1896 Clarke compiled a small book entitled Notes for Church Members. In it he suggested a liturgical element in services, as some people found Congregational worship depressing, and defective in common utterance and expression. However, 'it is not wanted to enjoin anything,' but to let the minister add a little liturgy, to counteract some of 'our overdone independence'[32] and allow the congregation to respond together. In the Liturgy Clarke included some Anglican prayers and some contemporary forms, so a slight veering towards the Anglicanism of his youth is indicated.

In 1901 Clarke celebrated his jubilee, fifty years as a minister, all (except for the 1870's trip away) with the one congregation. This called forth many eulogies, and special celebrations were held. Three years later Clarke retired; he was now 82. His ministry was highly praised as unique in Australia for its length and for attracting the more thoughtful and earnest, particularly the young.[33]

After his various retirements, George Clarke lived a pleasant life pottering at Summerhome, and making occasional public appearances. In 1913 he died, aged ninety, and his wife died later in the same year. He was widely mourned, with his contemporaries praising his educational work, his thoughtful address both in his church and public lectures, and his great influence for good in the community.[34] His work in the University

and in his church are relatively easy to assess: in both he deeply influenced a small, though important, number of people. His general influence has already been dealt with, and can perhaps be summed up as representing for many Tasmanians an ideal. His outstanding qualities were his tolerance, his rationality, his charity and kindness, and his unworldliness and lack of guile. The fact that a man with these qualities was so universally admired - except by pro-Chiniquy fanatics and opponents of his Maori policy - throws light on the society of Tasmania in this period. Clarke stood against the bigotry, emotionalism and narrowness often seen as typical of this era, but the admiration and respect he won shows, at least, that his contemporaries felt they ought to value his qualities. Clarke does show up some of the failings in other leading Tasmanians of his day, but that a man of his calibre was content to remain in Tasmania is evidence that the colony had qualities which could appeal to such men.

The overall importance of Hopkins and Clarke can best be seen both as examples of forces shaping Tasmania, and as examples of the effect historical forces had in shaping Tasmanians. The first stage of Tasmanian history, that of survival, was ending as Hopkins arrived, and he was ideally situated to take advantage of the opportunities available in the next stage, the thirty years of economic development resulting in the appearance of Tasmania as a viable economic unit. Hopkins had the knowledge, ability, ambition and decisiveness which enabled him to reach the top during this period, and any qualities he lacked were not important in

securing this goal.

With other similar men he did pave the way for the emergence of Tasmania as an independent colony, and his views of the nature of the colony tended to dominate during the next period. He and other non-conformist philanthropists saw Tasmania as a place where honest toil could earn any man a decent living, and they tried to establish institutions and a climate wherein this could occur. More than most visionaries, they succeeded, but by the last decades of the nineteenth century their rather puritanical and unsophisticated society had been widened by considerable intellectual and educational development, typified by Clarke, and the earlier dogmatic views softened by increased tolerance (in his case at least). In many ways Tasmania was still a provincial backwater, but it did have citizens who envisaged it as a possible Utopia, and they did have some effect.

The contrast in Clarke's career in New Zealand then in Tasmania also illustrates the type of society Tasmania became. In New Zealand Clarke was something of a firebrand, vigorously defending the oppressed and standing by his own principles. In Tasmania he was peaceable, counselling quietness and tolerance. Of course when he was in New Zealand he was younger, and was encouraged by his father; but even later he could defend his views warmly if the occasion warranted this, as in the Chiniquy affair and his enthusiasm for the university. Clarke's general calm in Tasmania may be explained as a response to a situation where he saw no oppressed group, and as a result of Hopkins' influence.

Tasmanian history is often seen as a conflict between the convicts and the Establishment. The ideals and activities of the large group of philanthropic nonconformists, who had little to do with either convicts or the Establishment, is a neglected and important facet of Tasmanian development in the nineteenth century. Their goal came nearer realisation than that of either of the other two groups, and their vision of Tasmania as a place where the hardworking could win independence is still held by many people. Hopkins and Clarke as two of the most outstanding figures in this group therefore played an important part in shaping Tasmanian development.

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Unless otherwise stated, all references are in the Archives Office of Tasmania with accession numbers CO, CSO, LSD, NS, GO. TC refers to items in the Tasmania Collection, State Library of Tasmania. UTA refers to items in the University of Tasmania Archives. For fuller references see Bibliography.

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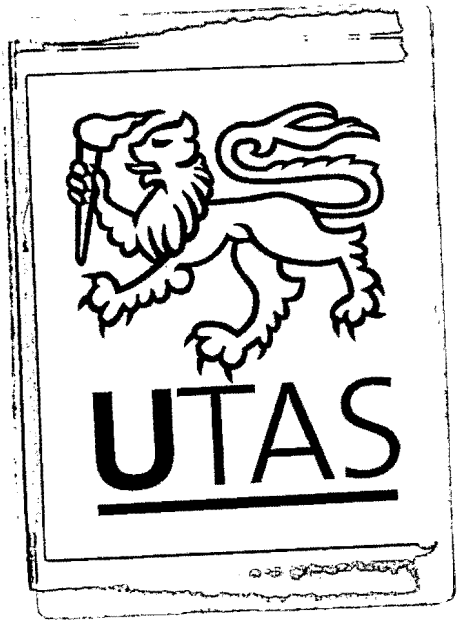

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Oral History

Dr Christine Walch, Summerhome, Moonah, Tasmania.

Dr J. Walch, 11 Altna-Craig Avenue, New Town, Tasmania.

Lady Clark, 8 Mooralla Road, Kooyong, Victoria.

-all the above are George Clarke's grandchildren.

Miss Emma Bayly, Mary Ogilvie Home, Pirie Street, New Town, Tasmania.